

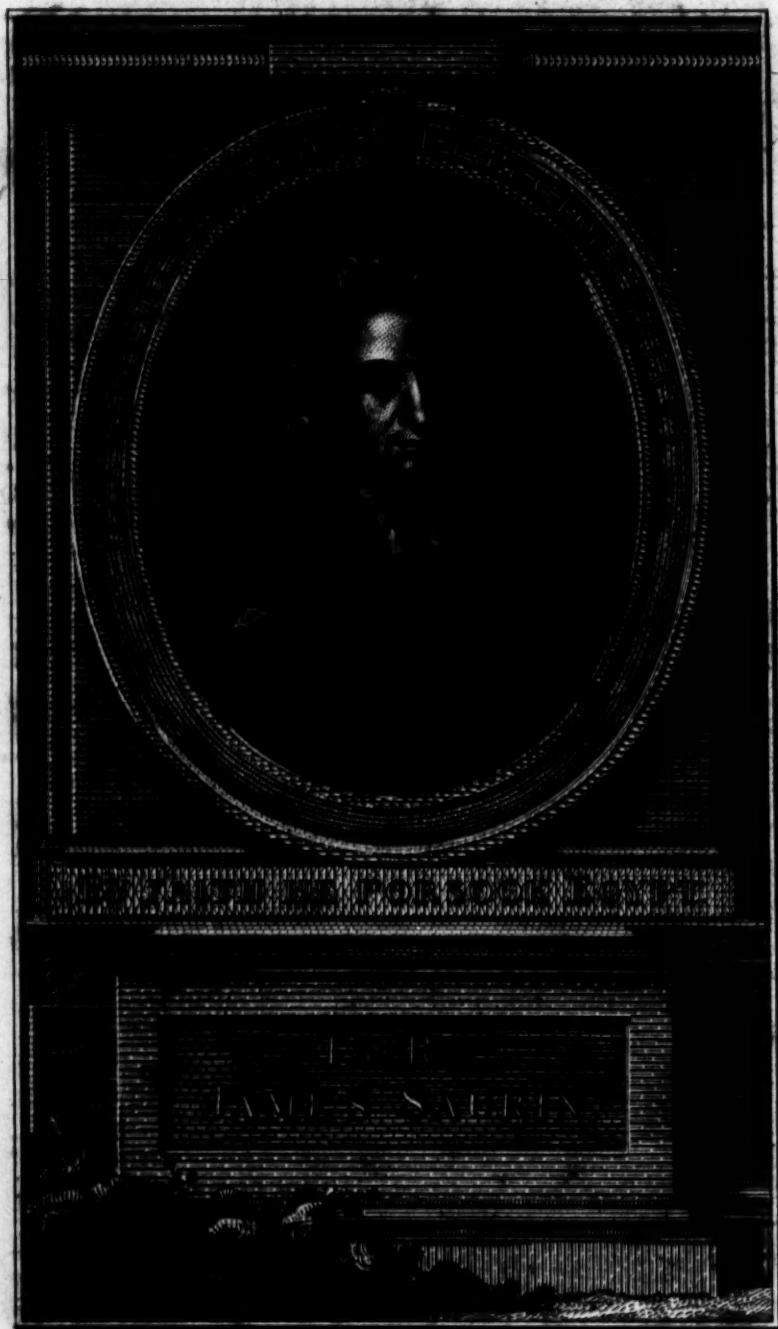
S E R M O N S
ON THE
A T T R I B U T E S of G O D.

S E R M O N S



ATTRIBUTES of GOD.





Hollaway Sculp.

S E R M O N S

ON THE
ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Translated from the original FRENCH of

The late Rev^d. JAMES SAURIN,

Pastor of the French Church at the Hague.

V O L U M E I.

Peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God.

S. PETER.

C A M B R I D G E.

Printed for the TRANSLATOR by FLETCHER & HOBSON.

M D C C L X X V.

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A. B. G.

C A M B R I D G E

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M D C L X V

M E M O I R S
OF THE
REFORMATION in FRANCE,
AND OF THE
L I F E
OF THE
REVEREND JAMES SAURIN.

THE celebrated Mr. Saurin, author of the following sermons, was a French refugee, who, with thousands of his countrymen, took shelter in Holland from the persecutions of France. The lives, and even the sermons, of the refugees are so closely connected with the history of the reformation in France, that, we presume, a short sketch of the state of religion in that kingdom till the banishment of the protestants by Lewis XIV. will not be disagreeable to some of the younger part of our readers.

Gaul, which is now called France, in the time of Jesus Christ, was a province of the Roman empire, and some of the apostles planted christianity in it. In the first centuries, while christianity continued a rational religion, it spread and supported itself without the help, and against the persecutions, of the Roman emperors. Numbers were converted from paganism, several christian societies were formed, and many eminent men, having spent their lives in preaching and writing for the advancement of the gospel, sealed their doctrine with their blood.

In the fifth century, Clovis I. a pagan king of France, fell in love with Clotilda, a christian princess of the house of Burgundy, who agreed to marry him only on
a condition

491. condition of his becoming a christian, to which he consented. The king, however, delayed the performance of this condition till five years after his marriage; when, being engaged in a desperate battle, and having reason to fear the total defeat of his army, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and put up this prayer, *God of queen Clotilda! Grant me the victory, and I vow to be baptized, and thenceforth to worship no other God but thee!* He obtained the victory, and, at his return, was baptized at Rheims. His sister, and more than three thousand of his subjects, followed his example, and christianity became the professed religion of France.

Dec. 25.
496.

Conversion implies the cool exercise of reason, and whenever passion takes the place, and does the office, of reason, conversion is nothing but a name. Baptism did not wash away the sins of Clovis; before it he was vile, after it he was infamous, practising all kinds of treachery and cruelty. The court, the army, and the common people, who were pagan when the king was pagan, and christian when he was christian, continued the same in their morals after their conversion as before. When the christian church, therefore, opened her doors, and delivered up her keys, to these new converts, she gained nothing in comparison of what she lost. She increased the number, the riches, the pomp, and the power, of her family: but she resigned the exercise of reason, the sufficiency of scripture, the purity of worship, the grand simplicity of innocence, truth, and virtue, and became a creature of the state. A virgin before; she became a prostitute now.

Such christians, in a long succession, converted christianity into something worse than paganism. They elevated the christian church into a temporal kingdom, and they degraded temporal kingdoms into fiefs of the church. They founded dominion in grace, and they explained grace to be a love of dominion. And by these means they completed that general apostacy, known by the name of *Papery*, which S. Paul had fore-
told,



told, and which rendered the reformation of the sixteenth century essential to the interests of all mankind.

The state of religion at that time was truly deplorable. Ecclesiastical government, instead of that evangelical simplicity, and fraternal freedom, which Jesus Christ, and his apostles, had taught, was become a spiritual domination, under the form of a temporal empire. An innumerable multitude of dignities, titles, rights, honors, privileges, and pre-eminences, belonged to it, and were all dependent on a sovereign priest, who, being an absolute monarch, required every thought to be in subjection to him. The chief ministers of religion were actually become temporal princes, and the high-priest, being absolute sovereign of the ecclesiastical state, had his court and his council, his ambassadors to negotiate, and his armies to murder, his flock. The clergy had acquired immense wealth, and, as their chief study was either to collect and to augment their revenues, or to prevent the alienation of their estates, they had constituted numberless spiritual corporations, with powers, rights, statutes, privileges, and officers. The functions of the ministry were generally neglected, and, of consequence, gross ignorance prevailed. All ranks of men were extremely depraved in their morals, and the Pope's penitentiary had published the price of every crime, as it was rated in the tax-book of the Roman chancery. Marriages, which reason and scripture allowed, the Pope prohibited, and, for money, dispensed with those which both forbade. Church-benefices were sold to children, and to laymen, who then let them to undertenants, none of whom performed the duty, for which the profits were paid; but all, having obtained them by simony, spent their lives in fleecing the flock to repay themselves. The power of the pontiff was so great, that he assumed, and, what was more astonishing, was suffered to exercise, a supremacy over many kingdoms. When monarchs gratified his will, he put on a triple crown, ascended a
a 2 throne,

throne, suffered them to call him *Holiness* and to kiss his feet. When they disobliged him, he suspended all religious worship in their dominions; published false and abusive libels, called bulls, which operated as laws, to injure their persons; discharged their subjects from obedience; and gave their crowns to any who would usurp them. He claimed an infallibility of knowledge, and an omnipotence of strength; and he forbade the world to examine his claim. He was addressed by titles of blasphemy, and, though he owned no jurisdiction over himself, yet he affected to extend his authority over heaven and hell, as well as over a middle place called purgatory, of all which places, he said, he kept the keys. This irregular church-polity was attended with quarrels, intrigues, schisms, and wars.

Religion itself was made to consist of the performance of numerous ceremonies, of pagan, jewish, and monkish extraction, all which might be performed without either faith in God, or love to mankind. The church ritual was an address, not to the reason, but to the senses of men: music stole the ear, and soothed the passions; statues, paintings, vestments, and various ornaments, beguiled the eye; while the pause, which was produced by that sudden attack, which a multitude of objects made on the senses, on entering a spacious decorated edifice, was enthusiastically taken for devotion. Blind obedience was first allowed by courtesy, and then established by law. Public worship was performed in an unknown tongue, and the sacrament was adored as the body and blood of Christ. The credit of the ceremonial produced in the people a notion, that the performance of it was the practice of piety, and religion degenerated into gross superstition. Vice, uncontrolled by reason or scripture, retained a pagan vigour, and committed the most horrid crimes; and superstition attoned for them, by building and endowing religious houses, and by bestowing donations on the church. Human merit was introduced, saints were invoked, and the

the perfections of God were distributed, by canonization, among the creatures of the Pope.

The pillars, that supported this edifice, were immense riches, arising, by impost, from the sins of mankind; idle distinctions between supreme and subordinate adoration; senseless axioms, called the divinity of the schools; preachments of buffoonery, or blasphemy, or both; cruel casuistry, consisting of a body of dangerous and scandalous morality; false miracles and midnight visions; spurious books and paltry relics; oaths, dungeons, inquisitions, and crusades. The whole was denominated the holy, catholic, and apostolic church, and laid to the charge of Jesus Christ.

Loud complaints had been made of these excesses, for the last hundred and fifty years, to those whose business it was to reform, and, as bad as they were, they had owned the necessity of reformation, and had repeatedly promised to reform. Several councils had been called for the purpose of reforming: but nothing had been done, nor could any thing be expected from assemblies of mercenary men, who were too deeply interested in darkness to vote for day. They were inflexible against every remonstrance, and, as a Jesuit has since expressed it, *They would not extinguish one taper, though it were to convert all the Hugonots in France.*

The restorers of literature reiterated and reasoned on these complaints: but they reasoned to the wind. The church champions were hard driven, they tried every art to support their cause: but, they could not get rid of the attack by a polite duplicity; they could not intimidate their sensible opponents by anathemas; they would not dispute the matter by scripture, and they could not defend themselves by any other method; they were too obstinate to reform themselves, and too proud to be reformed by their inferiors. At length, the plaintiffs laid aside the thoughts of applying to them, and, having found out *the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free*, went about reforming themselves. The reformers

reformers were neither popes, cardinals, nor bishops: but they were good men, who aimed to promote the glory of God, and the good of mankind. This was the state of the church, when Francis I. ascended the throne.

1515.

Were we to enter into a minute examination of the reformation in France, we would own a particular interposition of Providence: but we would also take the liberty to observe, that a happy conjunction of jarring interests rendered the sixteenth century a fit æra for reformation. Events, that produced, protected, and persecuted reformation, proceeded from open and hidden, great and little, good and bad causes. The capacities and the tempers, the virtues and the vices, the views and the interests, the wives and the mistresses, of the princes of those times; the abilities and dispositions of the officers of each crown; the powers of government, and the persons who wrought them; the tempers and geniusses of the people; all these, and many more, were springs of action, which, in their turns, directed the great events that were exhibited to public view. But our limits allow no enquiries of this kind.

In 1524.

1587.

The reformation, which began in Germany, spread itself to Geneva, and thence into France. The French had a translation of the bible, which had been made by Guiars des Moulins. It had been revised, corrected, and printed at Paris, by order of Charles VIII. and the study of it now began to prevail. The reigning king, who was a patron of learning, encouraged his valet de chambre, Clement Marot, to versify some of David's psalms, and took great pleasure in singing them,* and either protected, or persecuted the reformation,

* His majesty's favourite psalm, which he sang when he went a hunting, was the 42d. The queen used to sing the 6th, and the king's mistress the 130th. Marot translated fifty, Beza the other hundred, Calvin got them set to music by the best musicians, and every body sang them as ballads. When the reformed churches made them a part of their worship, the papists were forbidden to sing them any more, and to sing a psalm was a sign of a lutheran.

mation, as his interest seemed to him to require. Although he went in procession to burn the first martyrs of the reformed church, yet, in the same year, he sent for Melancthon to come into France to reconcile religious differences. Although he persecuted his own protestant subjects with infinite inhumanity, yet when he was afraid, that the ruin of the German protestants would strengthen the hands of the emperor Charles V. he made an alliance with the protestant princes of Germany, and he allowed the Duke of Orleans, his second son, to offer them the free exercise of their religion in the Dukedom of Luxemburg. He suffered his sister, the queen of Navarre, to protect the reformation in her country of Bearn; and even saved Geneva, when Charles Duke of Savoy would have taken it. It was no uncommon thing, in that age, for princes to trifle thus with religion. His majesty's first concern was to be a king, his second to act like a rational creature.

The reformation greatly increased in this reign. The pious queen of Navarre made her court a covert from every storm, supplied France with preachers, and the exiles at Geneva with money. Calvin, who had fled from his rectory in France, and had settled at Geneva, was a chief instrument, he slid his catechism, and other books into France. Some of the bishops were inclined to the reformation: but secretly, for fear of the christians of Rome. The reformation was called Calvinism. The people were named Sacramentarians, Lutherans, Calvinists; and nick-named *Hugonots*, either from Hugon, a Hobgoblin, because, to avoid persecution, they held their assemblies in the night; or from the gate Hugon, in Tours, where they used to meet; or from a Swiss word, which signifies a league.

Henry II. who succeeded his father Francis, was a weak, and a wicked prince. The increase of his authority was *the law and the prophets* to him. He violently persecuted the calvinists of France, because he was taught to believe, that heresy was a faction repug-

nant

1535.

1534.

1545.

1547.

nant to authority; and he made an alliance with the German protestants, and was pleased with the title of *Protector of the germanic liberties*, that is, protector of protestantism. This alliance he made, in order to check the power of Charles V. He was governed, sometimes by his queen, Catharine de Medicis, niece of Pope Clement VII. who, it is said, never did right except she did it by mistake: often by the constable de Montmorenci, whom, contrary to the express command of his father, in his dying illness, he had placed at the head of administration: chiefly by his mistress, Diana of Poitiers, who had been mistress to his father, and who bore an implacable hatred to the protestants: and always by some of his favourites, whom he suffered to amass immense fortunes by accusing men of heresy. The reformation was very much advanced in this reign. The gentry promoted the acting of plays, in which the comedians exposed the lives and doctrines of the popish clergy, and the poignant wit and humour of the comedians, afforded infinite diversion to the people, and conciliated them to the new preachers. Beza, who had fled to Geneva, came backward and forward into France, and was a chief promoter of the work. His Latin testament, which he first published in this reign, was much read, greatly admired, and contributed to the spread of the cause. The new testament was the Goliath's sword of the clerical reformers, *there was none like it.*

1548.

1556.

1559.

Francis II. succeeded his father Henry. He was only in the sixteenth year of his age, extremely weak both in body and mind, and therefore incapable of governing the kingdom by himself. In this reign began those civil wars, which raged in France for almost forty years. They have been charged on false zeal for religion: but this charge is a calumny, for the crown of France was the prize for which the generals fought. It was that which inspired them with hopes and fears, productive of devotions, or persecutions, as
either

either of them opened access to the throne. The interests of religion, indeed, fell in with these views, and so the parties were blended together in war.

The family of Charles the Great, which had reigned in France for 236 years, either became extinct, or was deprived of its inheritance, at the death of Lewis the Lazy. Him Hugh Capet had succeeded, and had transmitted the crown to his own posterity, which, in this reign, subsisted in two principal branches, in that of Valois, which was in possession of the throne, and in that of Bourbon, the next heir to the throne of France, and then in possession of Bearn. The latter had been driven out of the kingdom of Navarre: but they retained the title, and were sometimes at Bearn and sometimes at the court of France. The house of Guise, Dukes of Lorraine, a very rich and powerful family, to whose niece, Mary Queen of Scots, the young king was married, pretended to make out their descent from Charles the Great, and were competitors, when the times served, with the reigning family for the throne, and, at other times, with the Bourbon family, for the apparent heirship to it. With these views they directed their family alliances, perfected themselves in military skill, and intrigued at court for the administration of affairs. These three houses formed three parties. The house of Guise (the chiefs of which were five brethren at this time) headed one; the king of Navarre, the princes of the blood, and the great officers of the crown, the other; the Queen mother, who managed the interests of the reigning family, exercised her policy on both, to keep either from becoming too strong; while the feeble child on the throne was alternately a prey to them all.

Protestantism had obtained numerous converts in the last reign. Several princes of the blood, some chief officers of the crown, and many principal families, had embraced it, and its partizans were so numerous, both in Paris, and in all the provinces, that

each leader of the court parties, deliberated on the policy of strengthening his party, by openly espousing the reformation, by endeavouring to free the protestants from penal laws, and by obtaining a free toleration for them. At length, the house of Bourbon declared for protestantism, and, of consequence, the Guises were inspired with zeal, for the support of the ancient religion, and took the roman catholics under their protection. The king of Navarre, and the prince of Conde, were the heads of the first: but the Duke of Guise had the address to obtain the chief management of affairs, and the protestants were persecuted with insatiable fury all the time of this reign.

Had religion then no share in these commotions? Certainly it had, with many of the princes, and with multitudes of the soldiers: But they were a motley mixture; one fought for his coronet, another for his land, a third for liberty of conscience, and a fourth for pay. Courage was a joint stock, and they were mutual sharers of gain or loss, praise or blame. It was religion to secure the lives and properties of noble families, and though the common people had no lordships, yet they had the more valuable rights of conscience, and for them they fought. We mistake, if we imagine that the French have never understood the nature of civil and religious liberty, they have well understood it, though they have not been able to obtain it. *Suum cuique* would have been as expressive a motto as any that the protestant generals could have borne.

The persecution of the protestants was very severe at this time. Counsellor Du Bourg, a gentleman of eminent quality, and great merit, was burnt for heresy, and the court was inclined, not only to rid France of protestantism, but Scotland also, and sent La Brosse with three thousand men to assist the queen of Scotland in that pious design. This was frustrated by the intervention of Queen Elizabeth of England. The persecution becoming every day more intolerable, and the

the king being quite inaccessible to the remonstrances of his people, the protestants held several consultations, and took the opinions of their ministers, as well as those of their noble partizans, on the question, whether it were lawful to take up arms in their own defence, and to make way for a free access to the king to present their petitions? It was unanimously resolved, that it was lawful, and it was agreed, that a certain number of men should be chosen, who should go on a fixed day, under the direction of Lewis prince of Conde, present their petition to the king, and seize the Duke of Guise, and the Cardinal of Lorraine, his brother, in order to have them tried before the states. This affair was discovered to the Duke by a false brother, the design was defeated, and twelve hundred were beheaded. Guise pretended to have suppressed a rebellion, that was designed to end in the dethroning of the king, and, by this manœvre, he procured the general lieutenancy of the kingdom, and the glorious title of *Conservator of his country*. He pleased the puerile king by placing a few gaudy horse-guards round his palace, and he infatuated the poor child to think himself and his kingdom rich and happy, while his protestant subjects lay a bleeding through all his realm.

The infinite value of an able statesman, in such important crises as these, might here be exemplified in the conduct of Michael de L'Hospital, who was at this time promoted to the chancellorship: but our limits will not allow an enlargement. He was the most consummate politician that France ever employed. He had the wisdom of governing without the folly of discovering it, and all his actions were guided by that cool moderation, which always accompanies a superior knowledge of mankind. He was a concealed protestant of the most liberal sentiments, an entire friend to religious liberty, and it was his wise management that saved France. It was his fixed opinion, that FREE TOLERATION was sound policy. We must

1560.

not wonder that rigid papists deemed him an atheist, while zealous, but mistaking, protestants, pictured him carrying a torch behind him, to guide others but not himself. The more a man resembles God, the more will his conduct be censured by ignorance, partiality, and pride!

May.
1560.

The Duke of Guise, in order to please and strengthen his party, endeavoured to establish an inquisition in France. The chancellor, being willing to parry a thrust which he could not entirely avoid, was forced to agree to a severer edict than he could have wished, to defeat the design. By this edict, the cognizance of the crime of heresy was taken from the secular judges, and given to the bishops alone. The calvinists complained of this, because it put them into the hands of their enemies: and although their Lordships condemned and burnt so many heretics, that their courts were justly called *chambres ardentes*,* yet the zealous catholics thought them less eligible than an inquisition, after the manner of Spain.

Aug.
1560.

Soon after the making of this edict, many families having been ruined by it, Admiral Coligny presented a petition to the king, in the names of all the protestants of France, humbly praying that they might be allowed the free exercise of their religion. The king referred the matter to the parliament, who were to consult about it with the lords of his council. A warm debate ensued, and the catholics carried it against the protestants by three voices. It was resolved, that people should be obliged, either to conform to the old established church, or to quit the kingdom, with permission to sell their estates. The protestants argued, that in a point of such importance, it would be unreasonable, on account of three voices, to inflame all France with animosity and war: that the method of banishment was impossible to be executed: and that the obliging of those, who continued in France, to submit to

* Burning courts, fire-offices.

the Romish religion, against their consciences, was an absurd attempt, and equal to an impossibility. The chancellor, and the protestant Lords, used every effort to procure a toleration, while the catholic party urged the necessity of uniformity in religion. At length two of the bishops owned the necessity of reforming, pleaded strenuously for moderate measures, and proposed the deciding of these controversies in an assembly of the states, assisted by a national council, to be summoned at the latter end of the year. To this proposal the assembly agreed.

The court of Rome, having laid it down, as an indubitable maxim in church police, that an inquisition was the only support of the hierarchy, and dreading the consequences of allowing a nation to reform itself, was alarmed at this intelligence, and instantly sent a nuncio into France. His instructions were to prevent, if possible, the calling of a national council, and to promise the re-assembling of the general council of Trent. The protestants had been too often dupes to such artifices as these, and, being fully convinced of the futility of general councils, they refused to submit to the council of Trent now for several good reasons. The Pope, they said, who assembled the council, was to be judge in his own cause: the council would be chiefly composed of Italian bishops, who were vassals of the Pope as a secular prince, and sworn to him as a bishop and head of the church: the legates would pack a majority, and bribe the poor bishops to vote: each article would be first settled at Rome, and then proposed by the legates to the council: the Emperor, by advice of the late council of Constance, had given a safe conduct to John Hufs, and to Jerom of Prague, however, when they appeared in the council, and proposed their doubts, the council condemned them to be burnt. The protestants had reason on their side, when they rejected this method of reforming, for the art of procuring a majority of votes is the soul of this system of church-government. This art consists in the ingenuity of finding out, and in the dexterity of addressing each

each man's weak side, his pride or his ignorance, his envy, his gravity, or his avarice: and the possessing of this is the perfection of a Legate of Rome.

Dec. 3.

1560.

Dec. 13.

During these disputes, the king died without issue, and his brother Charles IX. who was in the eleventh year of his age, succeeded him. The States met at the time proposed. The chancellor opened the session by an unanswerable speech on the ill policy of persecution, he represented the miseries of the protestants, and proposed an abatement of their sufferings, till their complaints could be heard in a national council. The prince of Conde, and the king of Navarre, were the heads of the protestant party, the Guises were the heads of their opponents, and the queen mother, Catharine de Medicis, who had obtained the regency till the king's majority, and who began to dread the power of the Guises, leaned to the protestants, which was a grand event in their favour. After repeated meetings, and various warm debates, it was agreed, as one side would not submit to a general council, nor the other to a national assembly, that a *conference* should be held at Poissy, between both parties, and an edict was made, that no persons should molest the protestants, that the imprisoned should be released, and the exiles called home.

July.

1561.

1561.

Aug.

The conference at Poissy was held, in the presence of the king, the princes of the blood, the nobility, cardinals, prelates, and grandees of both parties. On the popish side, six cardinals, four bishops, and several dignified clergymen, and on the protestant about twelve of the most famous reformed ministers, managed the dispute. Beza, who spoke well, knew the world, and had a ready wit, and a deal of learning, displayed all his powers in favour of the reformation. The papists reasoned, where they could, and, where they could not, they railed. The conference ended where most public disputes have ended, that is, where they began, for great men never enter these lists, without a previous determination

Sept. 29.

determination not to submit to the disgrace of a public defeat.

At the close of the last reign, the ruin of protestantism seemed inevitable: but now, the reformation turned like a tide, overspread every place, and seemed to roll away all opposition, and, in all probability, had it not been for one sad event, it would now have subverted popery in this kingdom. The king of Navarre, who was now lieutenant general of France, had hitherto been a zealous protestant, he had taken incredible pains to support the reformation, and had assured the Danish ambassador that, in a year's time, he would cause the true gospel to be preached throughout France. The Guises caballed with the pope and the king of Spain, and they offered to invest the king of Navarre with the kingdom of Sardinia, and to restore to him that part of the kingdom of Navarre, which lay in Spain, on condition of his renouncing protestantism. The lure was tempting, and the king deserted, and even persecuted, the protestants. Providence is never at a loss for means to effect its designs. The queen of Navarre, daughter of the last queen, who had hitherto preferred a dance to a sermon, was shocked at the king's conduct, and instantly became a zealous protestant herself. She met with some unkind treatment, but nothing could shake her resolution; *Had I, said she, the kingdoms in my hand, I would throw them into the sea, rather than defile my conscience by going to Mass.* This courageous profession saved her a deal of trouble and dispute!

The protestants began now to appear more publicly than before. The queen of Navarre caused Beza openly to solemnize a marriage in a noble family, after the Geneva manner. This, which was consummated near the court, emboldened the ministers, and they preached at the countess de Senignan's, guarded by the marshall's provosts. The nobility thought that the common people had as good a right to hear the gospel as themselves, and caused the reformed clergy to preach

preach without the walls of Paris. Their auditors were thirty, or forty thousand people, divided into three companies, the women in the middle, surrounded by men on foot, and the latter by men on horseback; and, during the sermon, the governor of Paris placed soldiers to guard the avenues, and to prevent disturbances. The *morality* of this worship cannot be disputed, for, if God be worshipped in spirit and in truth, the place is indifferent. The *expediency* of it may be doubted: but, in a persecution of forty years, the French protestants had learnt that their political masters did not consider how rational, but how formidable they were.

The Guises, and their associates, being quite dispirited, retired to their estates, and the queen regent, by the chancellor's advice, granted an edict to enable the protestants to preach in all parts of the kingdom, except in Paris, and in other walled cities. The parliaments of France had then the power of refusing to register royal edicts, and the chancellor had occasion for all his address, to prevail over the scruples and ill humour of the parliament to procure the registering of this. He begged leave to say, that the question before them was one of those which had its difficulties, on whatever side it was viewed: that in the present case, one, of two things, must be chosen, either to put all the adherents of the new religion to the sword; or to banish them entirely, allowing them to dispose of their effects: that the first point could not be executed, since that party was too strong both in leaders and partizans; and, though it could be done, yet as it was staining the king's youth with the blood of so many of his subjects, perhaps when he came to age, he would demand it, at the hands of his governors: with regard to the second point, it was as little feasible, and could it be effected, it would be raising as many desperate enemies as exiles: that to enforce conformity against conscience, as matters stood now, was to lead the people to atheism. The edict at last was passed, but the house registered it

it with this clause, *in consideration of the present juncture of the times: but not approving of the new religion in any manner, and till the king shall otherwise appoint.* So hard fat toleration on the minds of papists!

A minority was a period favourable to the views of the Guises, and this edict was a happy occasion of a pretence for commencing hostilities. The Duke, instigated by his mother, went to Vassi, a town adjacent to one of his lordships, and, some of his retinue picking a quarrel with some protestants, who were hearing a sermon in a barn, he interested himself in it, wounded two hundred, and left sixty dead on the spot. This was the first protestant blood, that was shed in civil war.

Mar. 1.

1562.

The news of this affair flew like lightning, and, while the Duke was marching to Paris with a thousand horse, the city, and the provinces rose in arms. The chancellor was extremely afflicted to see both sides preparing for war, and endeavoured to dissuade them from it. The constable told him, *it did not belong to men of the long robe, to give their judgment with relation to war.* To which he answered, *that though he did not bear arms, he knew when they ought to be used.* After this, they excluded him from the councils of war.

Aug.

1562.

The queen-regent, alarmed at the Duke's approach to Paris, threw herself into the hands of the Protestants, and ordered Conde to take up arms. War began, and barbarities and cruelties were practised on both sides. The Duke of Guise was assassinated, the king of Navarre was killed at a siege, fifty thousand protestants were slain, and, after a year had been spent in these confusions, a peace was concluded. All, that the protestants obtained, was an edict, which excluded the exercise of their religion from cities, and restrained it to their own families.

1563.

Peace did not continue long, for the protestants, having received intelligence, that the Pope, the house of

1567. Austria, and the house of Guise, had conspired their ruin, and fearing that the king, and the court, were inclined to crush them, as their rights were every day infringed by new edicts, took up arms again in their own defence. The city of Rochelle declared for them, and it served them for an asylum for sixty years. They were assisted by Queen Elizabeth of England, and by the German princes, and they obtained, at the conclusion of this second war, the revocation of all penal edicts, the exercise of their religion in their families, and the grant of six cities for their security.

June. 1568. The pope, the king of Spain, and the Guises, finding that they could not prevail while the wise chancellor retained his influence, formed a cabal against him, and got him removed. He resigned very readily, and retired to a country seat, where he spent the remainder of his days. A strange confusion followed in the direction of affairs, one edict allowed liberty, another forbade it, and it was plain to the protestants that their situation was very delicate and dangerous. The articles of the last peace had never been performed, and the papists every where insulted their liberties, so that, in three months time, two thousand Hugonots were murdered, and the murderers went unpunished. War broke out again. Queen Elizabeth assisted the protestants with money, the Count Palatine helped them with men, the Queen of Navarre parted with her rings and jewels to support them, and, the Prince of Conde being slain, she declared her son, prince Henry, the head, and protector of the protestant cause, and caused medals to be struck with these words, *a safe peace, a compleat victory, a glorious death*. Her majesty did every thing in her power for the advancement of the cause of religious liberty, and she used to say, that *liberty of conscience ought to be preferred before honors, dignities, and life itself*. She caused the new testament, the catechism, and the liturgy of Geneva, to be translated, and printed at Rochelle. She abolished popery, and established

established protestantism in her own dominions. In her leisure hours, she expressed her zeal by working tapestries with her own hands, in which she represented the monuments of that liberty, which she procured by shaking off the yoke of the Pope. One suit consisted of twelve pieces. On each piece was represented some scripture history of *deliverance*, Israel coming out of Egypt, Joseph's release from prison, or something of the like kind. On the top of each piece were these words, *where the spirit is there is liberty*, and in the corners of each were broken chains, fetters, and gibbets. One piece represented a congregation at Mass, and a fox, in a friar's habit, officiating as a priest, grinning horribly and saying, *the Lord be with you*. The pieces were fashionable patterns, and dexterously directed the needles of the ladies to help forward the reformation.

After many negotiations a peace was concluded, and the free exercise of religion was allowed in all but walled cities, two cities in every province were assigned to the protestants, they were to be admitted into all universities, schools, hospitals, public offices, royal, seignioral, and corporate, and, to render the peace of everlasting duration, a match was proposed between Henry of Navarre, and the sister of King Charles. These articles were accepted, the match was agreed to, every man's sword was put up in its sheath, and the Queen of Navarre, her son, King Henry, the princes of the blood, and the principal protestants, went to Paris to celebrate the marriage. A few days after the marriage, the Admiral, who was one of the principal protestant leaders, was assassinated. This alarmed the King of Navarre, and the prince of Conde, but, the king and his mother promising to punish the assassin, they were quiet. The next Sunday, being S. Bartholomew's day, when the bells rang for morning prayers, the Duke of Guise, brother of the last, appeared with a great number of soldiers, and citizens, and began to murder the Hugonots, the wretched Charles appeared at the win-

1570.

Aug. 18.

1572.

Aug. 22.

Aug. 24.

dows of his palace, and endeavoured to shoot those who fled, crying to their pursuers, *Kill them, kill them.* The massacre continued seven days, seven hundred houses were pillaged; five thousand people perished in Paris, neither age, nor sex, nor even women with child were spared; one butcher boasted to the king that he had hewn down a hundred and fifty in one night. The rage ran from Paris to the provinces, where twenty five thousand more were cruelly slain; the queen of Navarre was poisoned; and, during the massacre, the king offered the king of Navarre, and the young prince of Conde, son of the late prince, if they would not renounce Hugonotism, either *death, mass,* or *bastile*: for, he said, he would not have one left to reproach him. This bloody affair does not lie between Charles IX. his mother, Catharine of Medicis, and the Duke of Guise, for the church of Rome, and the court of Spain, by exhibiting public rejoicings on the occasion, have adopted it for their own, or, at least, have claimed a share.

Would any one after this propose passive obedience, and non-resistance, to French protestants? Or can we wonder, that, abhorring a church, who offered to embrace them with hands reeking with the blood of their brethren, they put on their armour again, and commenced a fourth civil war? The late massacre raised up also another party, called *politicians*, who proposed to banish the family of Guise from France, to remove the queen mother, and the Italians, from the government, and to restore peace to the nation. This faction was headed by Montmorency, who had an eye to the crown. During these troubles, the king died, in the twenty fifth year of his age. Charles had a lively little genius, he composed a book on hunting, and valued himself on his skill in physiognomy. He thought courage consisted in swearing and taunting at his courtiers. His diversions were hunting, music, women, and wine. His court was a common sewer of luxury and

and impiety, and, while his favourites were fleecing his people, he employed himself in the making of rhimes. The part which he acted in the Bartholomean tragedy, the worst crime that was ever perpetrated in any christian country, will mark his reign with infamy, to the end of time.

Henry III. who succeeded his brother Charles, was first despised, and then hated, by all his subjects. He was so proud that he set rails round his table, and affected the pomp of an eastern king: and so mean that he often walked in procession with a beggarly brotherhood, with a string of beads in his hand, and a whip at his girdle. He was so credulous that he took the sacrament with the Duke of Guise, and with the Cardinal of Lorrain, his brother, and so treacherous that he caused the assassination of them both. He boasted of being a chief adviser of the late massacre, and the protestants abhorred him for it. The papists hated him for his adherence to the hugonot house of Bourbon, and for the edicts which he sometimes granted in favour of the protestants, though his only aim was to weaken the Guises. The ladies held him in execration for his unnatural practices: and the dutchess of Montpensier talked of clipping his hair, and of making him a monk. His heavy taxes, which were consumed by his favourites, excited the populace against him, and, while his kingdom was covering with carnage, and drenching in blood, he was training lapdogs to tumble, and parrots to prate.

In this reign was formed the famous *league*, which reduced France to the most miserable condition that could be. The chief promoter of it was the duke of Guise. The pretence was the preservation of the catholic religion. The chief articles were three. *The defence of the catholic religion. The establishment of Henry III. on the throne. The maintaining of the liberty of the kingdom, and the assembling of the states.* Those, who entered into the league, promised to obey such a General

1588.

1576.

neral as should be chosen for the defence of it, and the whole was confirmed by oath. The weak Henry subscribed it at first in hopes of subduing the hugonots; the queen mother, the Guises, the pope, the king of Spain, many of the clergy, and multitudes of the people, became *leaguers*. When Henry perceived that Guise was aiming by this league to dethrone him, he favoured the protestants, and they obtained an edict for the free exercise of their religion: but edicts were vain things against the power of the league, and three civil wars raged in this reign.

1576.

Guise's pretended zeal for the romish religion allured the clergy, and France was filled with seditious books and sermons. The preachers of the league were the most furious of all sermon-mongers. They preached up the excellency of the established church, the necessity of uniformity, the horror of hugonotism, the merit of killing the *tyrant* on the throne, (for so they called the king) the genealogy of the house of Guise, and every thing else that could inflame the madness of party-rage. It is not enough to say that these abandoned clergymen disgraced their office, truth obliges us to add, they were protected, and preferred to dignities in the church, both in France and Spain.

1588.

1589.

The nearer the Guises approached to the crown, the more were they inflamed at the sight of it. They obliged the king to forbid the exercise of the protestant religion. They endeavoured to exclude the king of Navarre, who was now the next heir to the throne, from the succession. They began to act so haughtily that Henry caused the Duke and the Cardinal to be assassinated. The next year he was assassinated his self by a friar. Religion flourishes where nothing else can grow, and the reformation spread more and more in this reign. The exiles at Geneva filled France with a new translation of the bible, with books, letters, catechisms, hymns, and preachers, and the people, contrasting the religion of Christ with the religion of Rome, entertained a most serious aversion for the latter.

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In the last king ended the family of Valois, and the next heir was Henry IV. of the house of Bourbon, king of Navarre. His Majesty had been educated a protestant, and had been the protector of the party, and the protestants had reason to expect much from him on his ascending the throne of France: but he had many difficulties to surmount, for could the men, who would not bear a hugonot subject, bear a hugonot king? Some of the old faction disputed his title, and all insisted on a *christian king*. Henry had for him, on the one side, almost all the nobility, the whole court of the late king, all protestant states, and princes, and the old hugonot troops: on the other, he had against him, the common people, most of the great cities, all the parliaments except two, the greatest part of the clergy, the pope, the king of Spain, and most catholic states. Four years his majesty deliberated, negotiated, and fought, but could not gain Paris. At length, the league set up a king of the house of Guise, and Henry found that the throne was inaccessible to all but papists, he therefore renounced heresy before Dr. Benoit, a moderate papist, and professed his conversion to popery. Paris opened its gates, the pope sent an absolution, and Henry became a *most christian king*. Every man may rejoice that his virtue is not put to the trial of refusing a crown!

1594.

When his majesty got to his palace in Paris, he thought proper to conciliate his new friends by shewing them particular esteem, and played at cards the first evening with a lady of the house of Guise, the most violent leaguer in all the party. His old servants, who had shed rivers of blood to bring the house of Bourbon to the throne, thought themselves neglected. While the protestants were slighted, and while those, who had followed the league, were disengaging themselves from it on advantageous conditions, one of the king's old friends said, "We do not envy your killing the fatted calf for the prodigal son, provided you do

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not sacrifice the obedient son to make the better entertainment for the prodigal. I dread those bargains, in which things are given up, and nothing got but mere words; the words of those who hitherto have had no words at all."

By ascending the throne of France, Henry had risen to the highest degree of wretchedness. He had offered violence to his conscience by embracing popery, he had stirred up a general discontent among the French protestants, the queen of England, and the protestant states, reproached him bitterly, the league refused to acknowledge him till the pope had absolved him in form, the king of Spain caballed for the crown, several cities held out against him, many of the clergy thought him an hypocrite, and refused to insert his name in the public prayers of the church, the lawyers published libels against him, the Jesuits threatened to assassinate him, and actually attempted to do it. In this delicate and difficult situation, though his majesty manifested the frailty of humanity by renouncing protestantism, yet he extricated himself and his subjects from the fatal labyrinths in which they were all involved, so that he deservedly acquired from his enemies the epithet *Great*, though his friends durst not give him that of *Good*.

The king had been so well acquainted with the protestants, that he perfectly knew their principles, and, could he have acted as he would, he would have instantly granted them all that they wanted. Their enemies had falsely said, that they were enemies to government: but the king knew better, and he also knew that the claims of his family would have been long ago buried in oblivion, had not the protestants supported them. Marshal Biron had been one chief instrument of bringing him to the throne. The Marshal was not a good hugonot, nor did he profess to be a papist: but he espoused the protestant party, for he was a man of great sense, and he hated violence in religion;
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and there were many more of the same cast. Parties, however, ran so high that precipitancy would have lost all, and Henry was obliged to proceed by slow and cautious steps.

The deputies of the reformed churches, soon waited on his majesty to congratulate him, and to pray for liberty. The king allowed them to hold a general assembly, and offered them some slight satisfaction; but the hardy veteran Hugonots, who had spent their days in the field, and who knew also that persons, who were of approved fidelity, might venture to give the king their advice without angering him, took the liberty of reminding him that they would not be paid, in compliments for so many signal services. Their ancestors, and they, had supported his right to the crown, along with their own right to liberty of conscience, and as Providence had granted the one, they expected that the other would not be denied. The king felt the force of these remonstrances, and ventured to allow them to hold provincial assemblies; after a while, to convene a national synod, and, as soon as he could, he granted them the famous Edict of NANTZ.

The Edict of Nantz, which was called *perpetual*, and *irrevocable*, and which contained ninety two articles, beside fifty six secret articles, granted to the protestants liberty of conscience, and the free exercise of religion; many churches in all parts of France, and judges of their own persuasion; a free access to all places of honor and dignity; great sums of money to pay off their troops; an hundred places as pledges of their future security, and certain funds to maintain both their preachers and their garrisons. The king did not send this edict to be registered in parliament, till the Pope's legate was gone out of the kingdom, so that it did not get there till the next year. Some of the old party in the house boggled at it very much, and particularly because the Hugonots were hereby qualified for offices,

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and places of trust: but his majesty sent for some of the chiefs to his closet, made them a most pathetic speech on the occasion, and, with some difficulty, brought them to a compliance. It is easy to conceive that the king might be very pathetic on this occasion, for he had seen and suffered enough to make any man so. The meanest Hugonot soldier could not avoid the pathos, if he related his campaigns. But it is very credible, that it was not the pathos of his majesty's language, but the power in his hand, that affected these intolerant souls.

No nation ever made a more noble struggle, for recovering liberty of conscience out of the rapacious hands of the Papal priesthood, than the French. And one may venture to defy the most sanguine friend to intolerance to prove, that a free toleration hath, in any country, at any period, produced such calamities in society as those, which persecution produced in France. After a million of brave men had been destroyed, after nine civil wars, after four pitched battles, after the besieging of several hundred places, after more than three hundred engagements, after poisoning, burning, assassinating, massacreing, murdering in every form, France is forced to submit to what her wise Chancellor de L'Hospital had at first proposed, *A FREE TOLERATION*. Most of the zealous leaguers voted for it, because *they had found, by experience, they said, that violent proceedings in matters of religion prove more destructive than edifying.* A noble testimony from enemies mouths!

France now began to taste the sweets of peace, the king employed himself in making his subjects happy, and the far greater part of his subjects, endeavoured to render him so. The protestants applied themselves to the care of their churches, and, as they had at this time a great many able ministers, they flourished, and increased the remaining part of this reign. The doctrine of their churches was calvinism, and their discipline was presbyterian, after the Geneva plan. Their churches

churches were supplied by able pastors; their universities were adorned with learned and pious professors, such as Casaubon, Daille, and others, whose praises are in all the reformed churches; their provincial, and national synods were regularly convened, and their people were well governed. Much pains were taken with the king to alienate his mind from his protestant subjects: but no motives could influence him. He knew the worth of the men, and he protected them till his death. This great prince was hated by the Popish clergy for his lenity, and was stabbed in his coach by the execrable Ravillac, whose name inspires one with horror and pain.

May 14.
1610.

Lewis XIII. was not quite nine years of age, when he succeeded his father Henry. The first act of the queen mother, who had the regency during the king's minority, was the confirmation of the edict of Nantz. Lewis confirmed it again, at his majority, promising to observe it inviolably. The protestants deserved a confirmation of their privileges at his hands; for they had taken no part in the civil wars, and disturbances, which had troubled his minority. They had been earnestly solicited to intermeddle with government: but they had wisely avoided it.

1614.

Lewis was a weak ambitious man, he was jealous of his power to excess, though he did not know wherein it consisted. He was so void of prudence, that he could not help exalting his flatterers into favourites, and his favourites into excessive power. He was so timorous that his favourites became the objects of his hatred, the moment after he had elevated them to authority; and he was so callous, that he never lamented a favourite's death or downfall. By a solemn act of devotion, attended with all the farce of pictures, masses, processions, and festivals, he consecrated his person, his dominions, his crown and his subjects to the Virgin Mary, desiring her to defend his kingdom, and to inspire him with grace to lead a holy life. The Popish

1618.

clergy adored him for thus sanctifying their superstitions by his example, and he, in return, lent them his power to punish his protestant subjects, whom he hated. His panegyrists call him *Lewis the just*: but they ought to acknowledge that his majesty did nothing to merit the title, till he found himself a dying.

Lewis's prime minister was an artful, enterprising clergyman, who, before his elevation, was a country bishop, and, after it, was known by the title of Cardinal de Richlieu: but the most proper title for his eminence is that, which some historians give him, of the *Jupiter Malfactor* of France. He was a man of great ability: but of no merit. Had his virtue been as great as his capacity, he ought not to have been intrusted with government, because all Cardinals take an oath to the Pope, and although an oath does not bind a bad man, yet as the taking of it gives him credit, so the breach of it ruins all his prospects among those, with whom he hath taken it.

1594.
1604.

The Jesuits, who had been banished from France, for attempting the life of Henry IV. had been recalled, and restored to their houses, and one of their society, under pretence of being responsible, as an hostage, for the whole fraternity, was allowed to attend the king. The Jesuits, by this mean, gained the greatest honor and power, and, as they excelled in learning, address, and intrigue, they knew how to obtain the king's ear, and how to improve his credulity to their own advantage.

1534.

This dangerous society was first formed by Ignatius Loyola, a spanish deserter, who, being frightened out of the army by a wound, took it into his head to go on pilgrimage, and to form a religious society for the support of the catholic faith. The Popes, who knew how to avail themselves of enthusiasm in church government, directed this grand spring of human action to secular purposes, and, by canonizing the founder, and arranging the order, elevated the society in a few years

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to a height that astonished all Europe. It was one opinion of this society, that the authority of kings is inferior to that of the people, and that they may be punished by the people in certain cases. It was another maxim with them, that sovereign princes have received from the hand of God a sword to punish heretics. The Jesuits did not invent these doctrines; but they drew such consequences from them as were most prejudicial to the public tranquillity: for, from the conjunction of these two principles, they concluded that an heretical prince ought to be deposed, and that heresy ought to be extirpated by fire and sword, in case it could not be extirpated otherwise. In conformity to the first of these principles, two kings of France had been murdered successively, under pretext that they were fautors of heretics. The parliament in this reign condemned this as a pernicious tenet, and declared that the authority of monarchs was dependent only on God. But the last principle, that related to the extirpation of heresy, as it flattered the court and the clergy, came into vogue. *Jus divinum* was the test of sound orthodoxy, and this reasoning became popular argumentation. *Princes may put heretics to death; therefore they ought to put them to death.*

1613.

Richlieu, who had wriggled himself into power, by publishing a scandalous libel on the protestants of France, advised the king to establish his authority, by extirpating the intestine evils of the kingdom. He assured his majesty that the Hugonots had the power of doing him mischief, and that it was a principle with them, that kings might be deposed by the people. The protestants replied to his invectives, and exposed the absurdity of his reasoning. Richlieu reasoned thus. John Knox, the Scotch reformer, did not believe the divine authority of kings. Calvin held a correspondence with Knox, therefore Calvin did not believe it. The French reformed church derived its doctrine from Calvin's church of Geneva, therefore the first Hugonots

did not believe it. The first Hugonots did not believe it, therefore the present Hugonots do not believe it. No man, who valued the reputation of a man of sense, would have scaled the walls of preſerment with ſuch a ridiculous ladder as this!

1620. The king, intoxicated with deſpotic principles, followed the fatal advice of his miniſter, and began with his patrimonial province of Bearn, where he cauſed the catholic religion to be eſtabliſhed. The Hugonots broke out into violence, at this attack on their liberties, whence the king took an opportunity to recover ſeveral places from them, and at laſt made peace with them on condition of their demolishing all their fortifications except thoſe of Montauban and Rochelle. Arnoux, the Jeſuit, who was a creature of Richlieu's, was, at that time, confeſſor to Lewis *the juſt*.

The politic Richlieu invariably purſued his deſign of rendering his maſter abſolute. By one art he ſubdued the nobility, by another the parliaments, and, as civil and religious liberty live and die together, he had engines of all ſorts to extirpate hereſy. He pretended to have formed the deſign of re-uniting the two churches of proteſtants and catholics. He drew off from the proteſtant party the Dukes of Sully, Bouillon, Lesdeguières, Rohan, and many of the firſt quality: for he had the world, and its glory to go to market withal; and he had to do with a race of men, who were very different from their anceſtors. Moſt of them had either died for their profeſſion, or had fled out of the kingdom, and ſeveral of them had ſubmitted to praſtiſe mean trades, in foreign countries, for their ſupport: But theſe were endeavouring to ſerve God and mammon, and his eminence was a fit caſuiſt for ſuch conſciences.

The proteſtants had reſolved, in a general aſſembly, to die rather than to ſubmit to the loſs of their liberties: but their king was weak, their prime miniſter was wicked, their clerical enemies were powerful and implacable, and they were obliged to bear thoſe infractions of edicts, which their oppreſſors made every day.

day. At length, Richlieu determined to put a period to their hopes, by the taking of Rochelle. The city was besieged both by sea and land, and the efforts of the besieged were at last overcome by famine, they had lived without bread for thirteen weeks, and, of eighteen thousand citizens, there were not above five thousand left. The strength of the protestants was broken by this stroke. Montauban agreed now to demolish its works, and the *just* king confirmed anew the *perpetual* and *irrevocable* edict of Nantz, as far as it concerned a free exercise of religion. 1625.

The Cardinal, not content with temporal power, had still another claim on the protestants, of a spiritual kind. Cautionary towns must be given up to that, and conscience to this. He suffered the edict to be infringed every day, and he was determined not to stop till he had established an uniformity in the church, without the obtaining of which, he thought, that something was wanting to his master's power. The protestants did all that prudence could suggest. They sent the famous Amyraut to court to complain to the king of the infraction of their edicts. Mr. Amyraut was a proper person to go on this business. He had an extreme attachment to the doctrine of passive obedience, this rendered him agreeable to the court: and he had declared for no obedience in matters of conscience, and this made him dear to the protestants. The synod ordered him not to make his speech to the king kneeling, as the deputies of the former synod had done: but to procure the restoring of the privilege, which they formerly enjoyed, of speaking to the king, standing, as the other ecclesiastics of the kingdom were allowed to do. The Cardinal strove, for a whole fortnight, to make Amyraut submit to this tacit acknowledgement of the clerical character in the popish clergy, and of the want of it in the reformed ministers. But Amyraut persisted in his claim, and was introduced to the king as the synod had desired. The whole court was charmed

charmed with the deputy's talents and deportment, Richlieu had many conferences with him, and, if negotiation could have accommodated the dispute between arbitrary power and upright consciences, it would have been settled now. He was treated with the utmost politeness, and dismissed. If he had not the pleasure of reflecting that he had obtained the liberty of his party, he had, however, the peace that ariseth from a consciousness of having used a proper mean to obtain it. The same mean was tried, some time after, by the inimitable Du Bosc, whom his countrymen call a PERFECT ORATOR, but alas! he was eloquent in vain.

The affairs of the protestants waxed every day worse and worse. They saw the clouds gathering, and they dreaded the weight of the storm: but they knew not whither to flee. Some fled to England, but no peace was there. Laud, the tyrant of the English church, had a Richlieu's heart without his head, he persecuted them, and, in conjunction with Wren, and other such churchmen, drove them back to the infinite damage of the manufactures of the kingdom. It must affect every liberal eye to see such Professors as Amyraut, Cappel, and De La Place, such ministers as Mestrezat and Blondel, who would have been an honor to any community, driven to the sad alternative of flying their country, or of violating their consciences. But their time was not yet fully come.

Cardinal Richlieu's hoary head went down to the grave, without the tears of his master, and with the hatred of all France. The king soon followed him, complaining, in the words of Job, *my soul is weary of my life*. The protestants had increased greatly in numbers in this reign, though they had lost their power: for they were now computed to exceed two millions. So true is it, that violent measures in religion weaken the church that employs them.

Lewis XIV. was only in the fifth year of his age at the demise of his father. The queen mother was appointed

appointed sole regent during his minority, and Cardinal Mazarine, a creature of Richlieu's, was her prime minister. The edict of Nantz was confirmed by the regent, and again by the king at his majority. But it was always the cool determination of the minister to follow the late Cardinal's plan, and to revoke it as soon as he could, and he strongly impressed the mind of the king with the expediency of it.

1643.

1652.

Lewis, who was a perfect tool to the Jesuits, followed the advice of Mazarine, of his confessors, and of the clergy about him, and as soon as he took the management of affairs into his own hand, he made a firm resolution to destroy the Protestants. He tried to weaken them by buying off their great men, and he had but too much success. Some, indeed, were superior to this state-trick, and it was a noble answer which the Marquis de Bougy gave, when he was offered a marshal's staff, and any government that he might make choice of, provided he would turn papist. *Could I be prevailed on, said he, to betray my God, for a marshal of France's staff, I might betray my king for a thing of much less consequence: but I will do neither of them, but rejoice to find that my services are acceptable, and that the religion, which I profess, is the only obstacle to my reward.* Was his majesty so little versed in the knowledge of mankind, as not to know that saleable virtue is seldom worth buying?

1661.

The king used another art as mean as the former. He exhorted the bishops to take care, that the points in controversy betwixt the catholics and calvinists should be much insisted on by the clergy, in their sermons, especially in those places that were mostly inhabited by the latter, and that a good number of missionaries should be sent among them, to convert them to the religion of their ancestors. It should seem, at first view, that the exercise of his majesty's power in this way would be formidable to the protestants, for, as the king had the nomination of eighteen archbishops,

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a hundred, and nine bishops, and seven hundred and fifty abbots, and as these dignitaries governed the inferior clergy, it is easy to see that all the Popish clergy of France were creatures of the court, and several of them were men of good learning. But the protestants had no fears on this head. They were excellent scholars, masters of the controversy, hearty in the service, and the mortifications, to which they had been long accustomed, had taught them that temperate coolness, which is so essential in the investigating and supporting of truth. They published, therefore, unanswerable arguments for their non-conformity. The famous Mr. Claude, pastor of the church at Charenton, near Paris, wrote *a defence of the reformation*, which all the clergy of France could not answer. The bishops, however, answered the protestants all at once, by procuring an edict which forbade them to print.

The king, in prosecution of his design, excluded the calvinists from his household, and from all other employments of honor and profit, he ordered all the courts of justice, erected by virtue of the edict of Nantz, to be abolished, and, in lieu of them, made several laws in favour of the catholic religion, which debarred from all liberty of abjuring the catholic doctrine, and restrained those protestants, who had embraced it, from returning to their former opinions, under severe punishments. He ordered soldiers to be quartered in their houses till they changed their religion. He shut up their churches, and forbade the ministerial function to their clergy, and, where his commands were not readily obeyed, he levelled their churches with the ground. At last he revoked the edict of Nantz, and banished them from the kingdom.

Os. 22.
1685.

“ A thousand dreadful blows, says Mr. Saurin, were struck at our afflicted churches, before that which destroyed them: for our enemies, if I may use such an expression, not content with seeing our ruin, endeavoured to taste it. One while, edicts were published against those,

those, who, foreseeing the calamities that threatened our churches, and not having power to prevent them, desired only the sad consolation of not being spectators of their ruin. Another while, against those, who, through their weakness, had denied their religion, and who, not being able to bear the remorse of their consciences, desired to return to their first profession. One while, our pastors were forbidden to exercise their discipline on those of their flocks, who had abjured the truth. Another while, children of seven years of age were allowed to embrace doctrines, which, the church of Rome says, are not level to the capacities of adults. Now a college was suppressed, and then a church shut up. Sometimes we were forbidden to convert infidels; and sometimes to confirm those in the truth, whom we had instructed from their infancy, and our pastors were forbidden to exercise their pastoral office any longer in one place than three years. Sometimes the printing of our books was prohibited, and sometimes those which we had printed were taken away. One while, we were not suffered to preach in a church, and another while, we were punished for preaching on its ruins, and at length we were forbidden to worship God in public at all. Now we were banished, then we were forbidden to quit the kingdom on pain of death. Here, we saw the glorious rewards of those who betrayed their religion; and there we beheld those, who had the courage to confess it, a haling to a dungeon, a scaffold, or a galley. Here, we saw our persecutors drawing on a sledge the dead bodies of those, who had expired on the rack. There, we beheld a false friar tormenting a dying man, who was terrified, on the one hand, with the fear of hell if he should apostatize, and, on the other, with the fear of leaving his children without bread, if he should continue in the faith: yonder, they were tearing children from their parents, while the tender parents were shedding more tears for the loss of their souls, than for that of their bodies, or lives."

Aug.
1669.May.
1679.June.
1680.June
1681.Jan.
1683.July
1685.Sept.
1685.Oct.
1685.
1689.

It is impossible to meet with parallel instances of cruelty among the heathens in their persecutions of the primitive christians. The bloody butchers, who were sent to them under the name of *Dragoons*, invented a thousand torments to tire their patience, and to force an abjuration from them. "They cast some, says Mr. Claude, into large fires, and took them out when they were half roasted. They hanged others with large ropes under their arm-pits, and plunged them several times into wells, till they promised to renounce their religion. They tied them like criminals on the rack, and poured wine with a funnel into their mouths, till, being intoxicated, they declared that they consented to turn catholics. Some they slashed and cut with pen-knives, some they took by the nose with red-hot tongs, and led them up and down the rooms till they promised to turn catholics." These cruel proceedings made eight hundred thousand persons quit the kingdom.

If the same actions may proceed from different principles, it must be always a hazardous, and often an unjust, attempt, to assign the true motives of men's conduct. But public actions fall under public notice, and they deserve censure, or commendation, according to the obvious good, or evil, which they produce in society. The art of governing requires a superior genius, and a superior genius hides, like a lofty mountain, its summit in the clouds. In some cases, a want of capacity, and, in others, a fund of selfishness, would prevent a subject's comprehension of his prince's projects, and, consequently, his approbation of the prince's measures; and, for these reasons, the cabinets of princes should be the least accessible, and their hearts the most impenetrable, parts of their dominions: but, when the prince would reduce his projects to practice, and cause his imaginations to become rules of action to his subjects, he ought to give a reason for his conduct, and, if his conduct be rational, he will do so, for as all law
is

is founded in reason, so reason is its best support. In such a case, the nature of the thing, as well as the respect, that is due to the rank of the prince, would require us to be either mute, or modest, on the *motive*; and the same reasons would require us to consider the reasonableness, or unreasonableness, of the *law*, for if it be not reason, it ought not to be law; and nothing can prevent our feeling the good, or ill, *effects* of the whole action.

To disfranchise, and to banish, to imprison, and to execute, some members of society are partial evils: but they are also sometimes general benefits, and the excision of a part may be essential to the preservation of the whole. The inflicting of these punishments on the French protestants, might possibly be essential to the safety of the whole nation. Or, perhaps his majesty might think it essential to monarchy; perhaps the clergy might think it essential to orthodoxy; perhaps the financiers, and the king's mistresses, might think it essential to the making of their fortunes: but we have nothing to do with these private views, the questions are, Was it essential to the general safety and happiness of the kingdom? Was it agreeable to the unalterable dictates of right reason? Was it consistent with the sound, approved maxims of civil policy? In these views, we venture to say, that the repeal of the edict of Nantz, which had been the security of the protestants, was an action irrational and irreligious, inhuman and ungrateful, perfidious, impolitic, and weak. If respect to religion, and right reason, were to compose a just title for the perpetrator of such a crime, it might call him, *a most inhuman tyrant*: certainly, it would not call him, *a most christian king*.

It was an *irrational* act, for there was no fitness between the punishment and the supposed crime. The crime was a mental error: but penal laws have no internal operation on the mind. It was *irreligious*, for religion ends where persecution begins. An action may begin in religion: but when it proceeds to injure a person,

a person, it ceaseth to be religion, it is only a denomination, and a method of acting. It was *inhuman*, for it caused the most savage cruelties. It was as *ungrateful* in the house of Bourbon to murder their old supporters, as it was magnanimous in the protestants, under their severest persecutions, to tell their murderer, that they *thought that blood well employed, which had been spilt in supporting the just claim of the house of Bourbon to the throne*. It was, to the last degree, *perfidious*, for the edict of Nantz had been given by Henry IV. for a perpetual, and irrevocable decree; it had been confirmed by the succeeding princes, and Lewis XIV. his self had assigned in the declaration the loyalty of the protestants, as a reason of the confirmation. *My subjects of the pretended reformed religion, says he, have given me unquestionable proofs of their affection and loyalty*. It had been sworn to by the governors and lieutenants general of the provinces, by the courts of parliament, and by all the officers of the courts of justice. What national perjury! Is it enough to say as this perjured monarch did, *My grandfather Henry IV. loved you, and was obliged to you. My father, Lewis XIII. feared you, and wanted your assistance. But I neither love you, nor fear you, and do not want your services?* The ill policy of it is confessed on all sides. Where is the policy of banishing eight hundred thousand people, who declare that a free exercise of religion ought not to injure any man's civil rights, and, on this principle, support the king's claim to the crown, as long as he executes the duty of the office? Where is the policy of doing this in order to secure a set of men, who openly avow these propositions, *the Pope is superior to all law: It is right to kill that prince, whom the Pope excommunicates: If a prince become an Arian, the people ought to depose him?* Where is the policy of banishing men, whose doctrines have kept in the kingdom, during the space of two hundred and fifty years, the sum of two hundred and fifty millions of livres, which, at a moderate calculation, would otherwise

otherwise have gone to Rome for indulgences, and annates, and other such trash? Who was the politician, the Count d'Avaux, who, while he was ambassador in Holland, offered to prove that the refugees had carried out of France more than twenty millions of property, and advised the king to recall it, by recalling its owners? or the king, who refused to avail himself of this advice? Who was the politician, the intolerant Lewis, who drove his protestant soldiers and sailors out of his service? or the benevolent prince of Orange, who, in one year, raised three regiments of French refugee soldiers, commanded by their own officers, and manned three vessels, at the same time, with refugee sailors, to serve the Dutch, while France wanted men to equip her fleets? The protestants, having been for some time, excluded from all offices, and not being suffered to enjoy any civil or military employments, had applied themselves either to the manufactures, or to the improving of their money in trade. Was it policy to banish a Monsi. Vincent, who employed more than five hundred workmen? Was policy on the side of that prince, who demolished manufactories? or on the side of those who set them up, by receiving the refugee manufacturers into their kingdoms? Had England derived no more advantage from its hospitality to the refugees than the silk manufacture, it would have amply repaid the nation. The memorials of the intendants of the provinces were full of such complaints. The intendant of Rouen said that the refugees had carried away the manufacture of hats. The intendant of Poitiers said that they had taken away the manufacture of druggets. In some provinces the commerce was diminished several millions of livres in a year, and in some half the revenue was sunk. Was it policy in the king to provoke the protestant states, and princes, who had always been his faithful allies against the house of Austria, and, at the same time, to supply them with eight hundred thousand new subjects? After all, it

From
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to
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was

was a *weak* and foolish step, for the protestants were not extirpated. There remained almost as many in the kingdom, as were driven out of it, and, even at this day, though now and then a preacher hath been hanged, and now and then a family murdered, yet the opulent province of Languedoc is full of protestants, the Lutherans have the university of Alsace, neither art nor cruelty can rid the kingdom of them, and some of the greatest ornaments of France now plead for a FREE TOLERATION.

The refugees charge their banishment on the *clergy* of France, and they give very good proof of their assertion, nor do they mistake, when they affirm that their sufferings are a part of the religion of Rome, for Pope Innocent XI. highly approved of this persecution. He wrote a brief to the king, in which he assured him that what he had done against the heretics of his kingdom would be immortalized by the elogies of the catholic church. He delivered a discourse in the consistory, in which he said, *the most christian king's* zeal, and PIETY, did wonderfully appear in extirpating heresy, and in clearing his whole kingdom of it in a very few months. He ordered *Te Deum* to be sung, to give thanks to God for this return of the heretics into the pale of the church, which was accordingly done with great pomp. If this persecution were clerical policy, it was bad, and, if it were the religion of the French clergy, it was worse. In either case the church procured great evil to the state. Lewis XIV. was on the pinnacle of glory at the conclusion of the peace of Nimeguen, his dominion was, as it were, established over all Europe, and was become an inevitable prejudice to neighbouring nations: but, here he began to extirpate heresy, and here he began to fall, nor has the nation ever recovered its grandeur since.

Protestant powers opened their arms to these venerable exiles. Abbadie, Ancillon, and others, fled to Berlin. Basnage, Claude, Du Bosc, and many more, found

found refuge in Holland. The famous Dr. Allix, with numbers of his brethren, came to England. A great many families went to Geneva, among which was that of Saurin.

Mr. Saurin, the father of our author, was an eminent protestant lawyer at Nismes, who, after the repeal of the edict of Nantz, retired to Geneva. He was considered at Geneva as the oracle of the French language, the nature, and beauty, of which he thoroughly understood. He had four sons, whom he trained up in learning, and who were all so remarkably eloquent, that eloquence was said to be hereditary in the family. The Reverend Lewis Saurin, one of the sons, was afterward pastor of a French church in London. Saurin, the father, died at Geneva. James, the author of the following sermons, was born at Nismes, and went with his father into exile, to Geneva, where he profited very much in learning.

In the seventeenth year of his age, Saurin quitted his studies to go into the army, and made a campaign as a cadet in lord Galloway's company. The next year his captain gave him a pair of colours in his regiment, which then served in Piedmont: But the year after, the duke of Savoy, under whom Saurin served, having made his peace with France, Saurin quitted the profession of arms, for which he was never designed, and returned to Geneva to study.

Geneva was, at that time, the residence of some of the best scholars in Europe, who were in the highest estimation in the republic of letters. Pictet, Lewis Tronchin, and Philip Mestrezat, were professors of divinity there, Alphonso Turretin was professor of sacred history, and Chouet, who was afterward taken from his professorship, and admitted into the government of the republic, was professor of natural philosophy. The other departments were filled with men, equally eminent in their several professions. Some of them were natives of Geneva, others were exiles from

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Italy and France, several were of noble families, and all of them were men of eminent piety. Under these great masters, Saurin became a student, and particularly applied himself to divinity, as he now began to think of
 1696. devoting himself to the ministry. To dedicate one's self to the ministry in a wealthy, flourishing church, where rich benefices are every day becoming vacant, requires very little virtue, and sometimes only a strong propensity to vice: but to choose to be a minister in such a poor, banished, persecuted church as that of the French protestants, argues a noble contempt of the world, and a supreme love to God, and to the souls of men. These are the best testimonials, however, of a young minister, whose profession is, not to enrich, but
 1 Tim. iv. 16. to *save himself, and them who hear him.*

1700.

After Mr. Saurin had finished his studies, he visited Holland, and England. In the first he made a very short stay: but in the last he staid almost five years, and preached with great acceptance among his fellow exiles in London. Of his person an idea may be formed by the annexed copper-plate, which is said to be a great likeness, and for which I am indebted to my ingenious friend Mr. Thomas Holloway, as I am to his amiable brother, Mr. John Holloway, for several anecdotes of Saurin. His dress was that of the French clergy, the gown and cassock. His address was perfectly genteel, a happy compound of the affable and the grave, at an equal distance from rusticity and foppery. His voice was strong, clear, and harmonious, and he never lost the management of it. His stile was pure, unaffected, and eloquent, sometimes plain, and sometimes flowery: but never improper, as it was always adapted to the audience, for whose sake he spoke. An Italian acquaintance of mine, who often heard him at the Hague, tells me, that in the introductions of his sermons he used to deliver himself in a tone modest and low; in the body of the sermon, which was adapted to the understanding, he was plain, clear, and argumen-
 tative,

tative, pausing at the close of each period, that he might discover, by the countenances and motions of his hearers, whether they were convinced by his reasoning; in his addresses to the wicked, (and it is a folly to preach as if there were none in our assemblies. Mr. Saurin knew mankind too well.) He was often sonorous, but oftener a weeping suppliant at their feet. In the one he sustained the authoritative dignity of his office, in the other he expressed his master's, and his own benevolence to bad men, *praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God.* In general, adds my friend, his preaching resembled a plentiful shower of dew, softly and imperceptibly insinuating itself into the minds of his numerous hearers, as the dew into the pores of plants, till the whole church was dissolved, and all in tears under his sermons. His doctrine was that of the French protestants, which, at that time, was moderate calvinism. He approved of the discipline of his own churches, which was presbyterian. He was an admirable scholar, and, which were his highest encomiums, he had an unconquerable aversion to sin, a supreme love to God, and to the souls of men, and a holy, unblemished life. Certainly he had some faults: but, as I have never heard of any, I can publish none.

During his stay in England, he married a Miss Catherine Boyton, by whom he had a son, named Philip, who survived him; but whether he had any more children, I know not. Two years after his marriage he returned to Holland, where he had a mind to settle: but, the pastoral offices being all full, and meeting with no prospect of a settlement, though his preaching was received with universal applause, he was preparing to return to England, when a chaplainship to some of the nobility at the Hague, with a stipend, was offered to him. This situation exactly suited his wishes, and he accepted the place.

The Hague, it is said, is the finest village in Europe. It is the residence of the States General, of ambassa-

1703.

1705.

1705.

2 Cor. v.
20.

dors, and envoys, from other courts, of a great number of nobility, and gentry, and of a multitude of french refugees. The princes of Orange have a spacious palace here, and the chapel of the palace was given to the refugees for a place of public worship, and, it being too small to contain them, it was enlarged by above half. This French church called him to be one of their pastors. He accepted the call, and continued in his office till his death. He was constantly attended by a very crowded and brilliant audience, was heard with the utmost attention and pleasure, and, what few ministers can say, the effects of his ministerial labours were seen in the holy lives of great numbers of his people.

When the Princess of Wales, afterward Queen Caroline, passed through Holland, in her way to England, Mr. Saurin had the honour of paying his respects to that illustrious lady. Her royal highness was pleased to single him out from the rest of the clergy, who were present, and to say to him, *Do not imagine that, being dazzled with the glory which this revolution seems to promise me, I have lost sight of that God, from whom it proceeds. He hath been pleased to distinguish it with so many extraordinary marks, that I cannot mistake his divine hand; and, as I consider this long train of favours as immediately coming from him, to him alone I consecrate them.* It is not astonishing, if Saurin speaks of this condescension with rapture. They are the kind and christian actions of the governors of a free people, and not the haughty airs of a French tyrant, insulting his slaves, that attach and inflame the hearts of mankind. The history of this illustrious christian queen is not written in blood, and therefore it is always read with tears of grateful joy.

Her royal highness was so well satisfied of Mr. Saurin's merit, that soon after her arrival in England, she ordered Dr. Boulter, who was preceptor to prince Frederic, the father of his present majesty, to write to Saurin, to draw up a treatise on the education of princes.

princes. Saurin immediately obeyed the order, and prefixed a dedication to the young princes. The book was never printed: but, as it obtained the approbation of the princess of Wales, who was an incomparable judge, we may conclude that it was excellent in its kind. This was followed by a handsome present from the princess to the author.

His most considerable work was intituled, *Discourses historical, critical and moral, on the most memorable events of the old and new testament.* This work was undertaken by the desire of a Dutch merchant, who expended an immense sum in the engraving of a multitude of copper-plates, which adorn the work. It consists of six folio volumes. Mr. Saurin died before the third was finished: but Mr. Roques finished the third, and added a fourth on the old testament; and Mr. de Beau-fobre subjoined two on the new testament. The whole is replete with very extensive learning, and well worth the careful perusal of students in divinity. The first of these was translated into English by Chamberlayne, soon after its first publication in French.

His *dissertation on the expediency of sometimes disguising the truth*, raised a furious clamour against our author. He does not decide the question: but he seems to take the affirmative. This produced a paper war, and his antagonists unjustly censured his morals. The mildness of his disposition rendered him a desirable opponent, for though he was sure to conquer, yet he subdued his adversary so handsomely, that the captive was the better for his defeat. But others did not controvert with so much temper. Some wrote against him, others for him. At length the synod decided the dispute in his favour.

He published a small, but valuable piece on *the state of christianity in France*. It treats of many important points of religion, in controversy between the catholics and protestants.

There are twelve volumes of his sermons. Some are dedicated to his Majesty George II. and the king was pleased to allow him a handsome pension. Some

to

to her Majesty Queen Caroline, while she was princess of Wales. One to Count Wassanaer, a Dutch nobleman. Two were dedicated to her Majesty, after his decease by his son, Professor Dumont, and Mr. Husson, to whom Mr. Saurin left his manuscripts, published the rest, and one volume is dedicated to the Countess Dowager of Albemarle. The English seem therefore to have a right to the labours of this great man.

Mr. Saurin died at the Hague on Dec. 30th, 1730, most sincerely regretted by all his acquaintances, as well as by his church, who lost in him a truly primitive christian minister, who spent his life, in watching over his flock, as one who knew that he must give an account.

In regard to this translation, it was first undertaken by the desire of a small circle of private friends, for our mutual edification. If I have suffered my private opinion to be prevailed over by others, to print this translation, it is not because I think myself able to give language to Saurin: but because I humbly hope that the sentiments of the author may be conveyed to the reader, by this translation. His sentiments, I think, are, in general, those of the holy scripture, and his manner of treating them well adapted to impress them on the heart. I have endeavoured not to disguise his meaning, though I have not been able to adopt his stile, for which defect, though I print them by private subscription, for the use of my friends, on whose candour I depend, yet I do not offer to publish them to the world, for the language of Mr. Saurin. I should have been glad to have pleased every subscriber, by inserting those sermons, which were most agreeable to him, had I known which they were: but as this was impossible, I have followed my own judgment, or perhaps exposed my want of it. The first volume aims to secure the doctrine of a *God*, against the attacks of atheists. In the second we mean to plead for the holy

holy *scriptures* against deists. In the third, we intend to take those sermons, which treat of the *doctrines of christianity*, as we humbly conceive that the new testament is something more than a system of moral philosophy. And the last volume we dedicate to moral subjects, because we think christianity a holy religion, productive of moral obedience in all its true disciples. May the God of all grace bless the reading of them to the weakening of the dominion of sin, and to the advancement of the kingdom of our blessed redeemer, Jesus Christ.

R. ROBINSON,
Chebsteron near Cambridge,
April 15th, 1775.

CON-

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S E R M O N I.

T H E

Perfection of Christian Knowledge.

Vol. I.

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S E R M O N I



Perfection of Church

Vol. I.

S E R M O N I.

The Perfection of Christian Knowledge.

HEB. V. 12, 13, 14.—VI. 1, 2, 3.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of age have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.— Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, LET US GO ON UNTO PERFECTION, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do if God permit.

I Have put two subjects together which are closely connected, and I intend to explain both in this discourse. The last part of the text is a consequence of the first. In the first, St. Paul reproveth some christians for their little knowledge; in the last, he exhorts them to increase it: and the connection of both will appear, if you attend to the subject under his consideration. The epistle to the Hebrews, which may be considered as the apostle's principal work, treats of the most difficult points of divinity and morality. In

S E R M. particular, this is the idea that must be formed of

- I. Melchisedec's priesthood, as a prefiguration of Jesus Christ's. This mysterious subject the Apostle had begun to discuss, but he had not proceeded far in it before he found himself at a stand, by recollecting the character of those to whom he was writing. He describes them, in the text, as men who were grown old in the profession of Christianity indeed, but who knew nothing more of it than its first principles: and he endeavours to animate them with the laudable ambition of penetrating the noblest parts of that excellent system of religion, which Jesus Christ had published, and which his apostles had explained in all its beauty, and in all its extent.

This general notion of S. Paul's design, in the words of my text, is the best comment on his meaning, and the best explication, that we can give, of his terms.

By *the first principles of the oracles of God*, to which the Hebrews confined themselves, the apostle means the rudiments of that science of which God is the object; that is, christian divinity and morality: and these rudiments are here also called *the principles of Christ*,* that is, the first principles of that doctrine which Jesus Christ had taught. These are compared to *milk*, which is given to children incapable of digesting *strong meat*; and they are opposed to the profound knowledge of those who have been habituated by long exercise to study and meditation, or, as the apostle expresseth it, *who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*.

In this class S. Paul places, first, *repentance from dead works, and faith towards God*. These were the first truths which the heralds of the gospel preached to their hearers: to them they said, *Repent, and believe the gospel*.

S. Paul places in the same class, secondly, the doctrine of baptisms, that is, the confession of faith

της αρχης του Χριστου λογος.



that was required of those who had resolved to profess S E R M. christianity and to be baptized. Of such persons a confession was required, and their answers to certain questions were demanded. The formularies that have been used on this occasion, have been extremely diversified at different places and in different times, but the most ancient are the shortest, and the most determinate. One question, that was put to the catechumen, was, *Dost thou renounce the devil?* to which he answered, *I renounce him.* Another was, *Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ?* to which he replied, *I believe in him.* S. Cyprian calls these questions *the baptismal interrogatory*; and the answers are called by Tertullian *the answer of salvation*: and we have a passage upon this article in an author still more respectable, I mean S. Peter, who says, *Baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*: that is, the answer which was given by the catechumen before his baptism. 1. Peter iii. 21.

Thirdly, Among the rudiments or first principles of christianity, S. Paul puts *the laying on of hands*, by which we understand the gift of miracles, which the apostles communicated by imposition of hands to those who embraced the gospel. We have several instances of this in scripture, and a particular account of it in the eighth chapter of Acts. It is there said, that Philip, having undeceived many of the Samaritans, whom Simon the forcerer *had of a long time bewitched*, Verfes 11. 12. 14, 17. baptized both men and women, and that the apostles, Peter and John, laid their hands on them, and by that ceremony communicated to them the gifts of the holy Ghost.

The resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, are two other articles which S. Paul places in the same class: Articles believed by the weakest christians, received by the greatest part of the Jews, and admitted by even many of the heathens. Now the apostle wishes that the Hebrews, leaving these principles, would aspire

S E R. M. aspire to be perfect. *Let us go on unto perfection*, says

1. he, let us proceed from the catechumen state to a thorough acquaintance with that religion, which is *wisdom among them that are perfect*; that is, a system of doctrine which cannot be well understood by any except by such as the heathens call *perfect*. They denominated those *perfect*, who did not rest in a superficial knowledge of a science, but who endeavoured thoroughly to understand the whole. This was the design of S. Paul in writing to the Hebrews; and this is ours in addressing you.

We will endeavour, first, to give you as exact and adequate a notion as we can of christian divinity and morality, and from thence to infer, that you can neither see the beauty, nor reap the benefit of either of them, while you confine yourselves, as most of you do, to a few loose principles, and continue unacquainted with the whole system or body of religion.

Secondly, We will enquire, why so many of us do confine our attention to these first truths, and never proceed to the rest.

Lastly, We will give you some directions how to increase your knowledge, and to attain that *perfection* to which S. Paul endeavoured to conduct the Hebrews. This is the whole that we propose to treat of in this discourse.

I. It is evident from the nature of Christianity, that you can neither see its beauties, nor reap its benefits, while you attend only to some loose principles, and do not consider the whole system: for the truths of religion form a system, a body of coherent doctrines, closely connected, and in perfect harmony. Nothing better distinguisheth the accurate judgment of an orator, or a philosopher, than the connection of his orations or systems. Unconnected systems, orations, in which the author is determined only by caprice and chance, as it were, to place the proposition which follows after that which precedes, and that which precedes

precedes before that which follows; such orations and systems are less worthy of rational beings, than of creatures destitute of intelligence, whom nature has formed capable of producing sounds indeed, but not of forming ideas. Orations and systems should be connected: each part should occupy the place which order and accuracy, not caprice and chance, assign it. They should resemble buildings constructed according to the rules of art; the laws of which are never arbitrary, but fixed and inviolable, founded on the nature of regularity and proportion: or, to use S. Paul's expression, each should be *a body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.* Eph. iv. 16.

Let us apply this to the subject in hand. Nothing better proves the divinity of religion, than the connection, the harmony, the agreement of its component parts. I am aware that this grand characteristic of christianity hath occasioned many mistakes among mankind. Under pretence that a religion proceeding from God must harmonize in its component parts, men have licentiously contrived a chain of propositions to please themselves. They have substituted a phantom of their own imagination, for that body of doctrine which God hath given us in the holy scriptures.—Hence so much obstinacy in maintaining, after so much rashness and presumption in advancing such phantoms. For, my brethren, of all obstinate people, none excel more in their dreadful kind, than those who are prejudiced in favour of certain systems. A man who does not think himself capable of forming a connected system, can bear contradiction, because, if he be obliged to give up some of the propositions which he hath advanced, some others which he embraces will not be disputed, and what remain may indemnify him for what he surrenders. But a man prepossessed with an imaginary system of his own has seldom so much teachableness. He knows, that if one link be taken away his chain falls to pieces; and that there

S E R M. there is no removing a single stone from his building
 1. without destroying the whole edifice : he considers the upper skins which covered the tabernacle, as typical as the ark in the holy place, or the mercy-seat itself. The staff with which Jacob passed over Euphrates, and of which he said, *with my staff I passed over this river*, seems to him as much designed by the spirit of God to typify the cross on which Jesus Christ redeemed the church, as the serpent of brass which was lifted up in the desert by the express command of God himself.

But if infatuation with systems hath occasioned so many disorders in the church, the opposite disposition, I mean, the obstinate rejection of all, or the careless composition of some, hath been equally hurtful: for it is no less dangerous, in a system of religion, to omit what really belongs to it, than to incorporate any thing foreign from it.

Let us be more explicit. There are two sorts of truths in religion; truths of speculation, and truths of practice. Each truth is connected not only with other truths in its own class, but truths of the first class are connected with those of the second, and of these parts thus united is composed that admirable body of doctrine which forms the system of religion.

There are in religion some truths of speculation, there is a chain of doctrines. God is holy: this is the first truth. A holy God can have no intimate communion with unholy creatures: this is a second truth which follows from the first. God, who can have no communion with unholy creatures, can have no communion with men who are unholy creatures: this is a third truth which follows from the second. Men, who are unholy creatures, being incapable as such of communion with the happy God, must on that very account be intirely miserable: this is a fourth truth which follows from the third. Men, who must be absolutely miserable because they can have no communion with the holy, happy God, become objects
 of

of the compassion of that God, who is as loving and S E R M.
merciful as he is happy and holy: this is a fifth truth I.
which follows from the fourth. This loving and
merciful God is naturally inclined to relieve a mul-
titude of his creatures, who are ready to be plunged
into the deepest miseries: this is a sixth truth which
follows from the fifth.

Thus follow the thread of Jesus Christ's theology,
and you will find, as I said, each part that composeth
it depending on another, and every one giving another
the hand. For, from the loving and merciful incli-
nation of God to relieve a multitude of his creatures
from a threatening abyfs of the deepest miseries, fol-
lows the mission of Jesus Christ; because it was fit
that the remedy chosen of God to relieve the miseries
of men should bear a proportion to the causes which
produced it. From the doctrine of Jesus Christ's
mission follows the necessity of the spirit of God: because
it would have been impossible for men to have dis-
covered by their own speculations the way of salva-
tion, unless they had been assisted by a supernatural
revelation, according to that saying, *Things which eye* 1 Cor. ii.
hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into 9, 10.
the heart of man, God hath revealed unto us by his spirit.
From the doctrines of the mission of the son of God,
and of the gift of the holy spirit, follows this most
comfortable truth, that we are the objects of the love
of God, even of love the most vehement and sincere
that can be imagined: for *God commended his love to-* Rom. v. 8:
wards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died
for us. And, as we are objects of that love which
God hath commended to us in his son, it follows, that
no bounds can be set to our happiness, that there is no
treasure too rich in the mines of *the blessed God*, no
duration too long in eternity, no communion with
the creator too close, too intimate, too tender, which
we have not a right to expect; according to that com-
fortable, that extatic maxim of S. Paul: *God, who* Rom. viii.
spared 32.
C

S E R M. *spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all,*
 I. *how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

This is a chain of some truths of the gospel. We do not say that it might not be lengthened; we do not pretend to have given a complete system of the doctrines of the gospel; we only say that the doctrines proposed are closely connected, and that one produceth another in a system of speculative gospel truths.

In like manner, there is a connection between practical truths. The class of practical truths is connected with the class of speculative truths, and each practical truth is connected with another practical truth.

The class of practical truths is connected with the class of speculative truths. As soon as ever we are convinced of the truth of the doctrines just now mentioned, we shall be thereby convinced that we are under an indispensable necessity to devote ourselves to holiness. People, who draw consequences from our doctrines injurious to morality, fall into the most gross and palpable of all contradictions. The single doctrine of Jesus Christ's mission naturally produceth the necessity of sanctification. Ye believe that the love of holiness is so essential to God, that rather than pardon criminals without punishing their crimes, he hath punished his own son. And can ye believe that the God to whom holiness is so essential, will bear with you while ye make no efforts to be holy? Do not ye see that in this supposition ye imagine a contradictory God, or rather, that ye contradict yourselves? In the first supposition, ye conceive a God to whom sin is infinitely odious: in the second, ye conceive a God to whom sin is infinitely tolerable. In the first supposition, ye conceive a God, who, by the holiness of his nature, exacts a satisfaction: in the second, ye conceive a God, who, by the indifference of his nature, loves the sinner while he derives no motives from the satisfaction to forsake his sin. In the first supposition, ye imagine a God who opposeth the

the strongest barriers against vice: in the second, ye S E R M.
imagine a God who removeth every obstacle to vice: I.
nothing being more likely to confirm men in sin than
an imagination, that, to what length soever they go,
they may always find, in the sacrifice of the son of
God, an infallible way of avoiding the punishment
due to their sin, whenever they shall have recourse to that
sacrifice. Were it necessary to enlarge this article,
and to take one doctrine after another, you would see
that every doctrine of religion proves what we have
advanced concerning the natural connection of religious
speculative truths with truths of practice.

But, if practical truths of religion are connected
with speculative truths, each of the truths of practice
is also closely connected with another. All virtues
mutually support each other, and there is no in-
validating one part of our morality, without, on that
very account, invalidating the whole.

In our treatises of morality, we have usually assigned
three objects to our virtues. The first of these objects
is God: the second is our neighbour: and the third
ourselves. St. Paul is the author of this division.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared Titus ii.
to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and ii, 12.
worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly
in this present world. But all these are connected to-
gether: for we cannot live *godly* without living at the
same time *righteously* and *soberly*: because to live *godly*
is to perform what religion appoints, and to take that
perfect Being for our example to whom religion con-
ducts and unites us. Now to live as religion appoints,
to take that perfect Being for our pattern to whom
religion conducts and unites us, is to live *righteously*
with our neighbour, and *soberly* ourselves. Strictly
speaking, we have not one virtue unless we have all
virtues; nor are we free from one vice unless we be
free from all vices: we are not truly charitable unless
we be truly just, nor are we truly just unless we be

S E R M. truly charitable: we are not truly liberal but as we avoid profuseness, nor are we truly frugal but as we avoid avarice. As I said before, all virtues naturally follow one another, and afford each other a mutual support.

Such is the chain of religious truths: such is the connection, not only of each truth of speculation with another truth of speculation, but of speculative truths with the truths of practice. There is then a concatenation, an harmony, a connection in the truths of religion: there is a system, a body of doctrine in the gospel. This is the article that we proposed to prove.

But, a religion in which there is such a chain, such an harmony and connection; a body of doctrine so systematically compacted and united ought not to be taken by bits and parts.

To illustrate this we may compare spiritual with natural things. The more art and ingenuity there is in a machine composed of divers wheels, the more necessary it is to consider it in its whole, and in all its arrangements, and the more does its beauty escape our observation when we confine our attention to a single wheel: because the more art there is in a machine the more essential is the minutest part to its perfection. Now deprive a machine of an essential part and you deface and destroy it.

Apply this to spiritual things. In a compact system, in a coherent body of doctrine, there is nothing useless, nothing which ought not to occupy the very place that the genius who composed the whole hath given it. What will become of religion if ye consider any of its doctrines separately? What becomes of religion if ye consider the holiness of God without his justice, or his justice without his mercy?

II. Let us then proceed to enquire why so many of us confine ourselves to a small number of religious truths, and incapacitate ourselves for examining the whole system. The fact is too certain. Hence, our preachers

preachers seem to lead us in obscure paths, and to lose S E R M.
us in abstract speculations, when they treat of some of 1.
the attributes of God, such as his faithfulness, his love
of order, his regard for his intelligent creatures. It
is owing to this that we are, in some sense, well ac-
quainted with some truths of religion, while we re-
main intirely ignorant of others, which are equally
plain, and equally important. Hence it is that the
greatest part of our sermons produce so little fruit,
because sermons are, at least they ought to be, con-
nected discourses, in which the principle founds the
consequence, and the consequence follows the prin-
ciple: all which supposes in the hearers an habit of
meditation and attention. For the same reason we are
apt to be offended when any body attempts to draw us
out of the sphere of our prejudices, and are not only
ignorant, but, (if you will pardon the expression) ig-
norant with gravity, and derive I know not what glory
from our own stupidity. Hence it is, that a preacher
is seldom or never allowed to soar in his sermons, to
rise into the contemplation of some lofty and rapturous
objects, but must always descend to the *first principles*
of religion, as if he preached for the first time, or as if
his auditors for the first time heard. Hence also it is
that some doctrines, which are true in themselves, de-
monstrated in our scriptures, and essential to religion,
become errors, yea sources of many errors in our
mouths, because we consider them only in themselves,
and not in connection with other doctrines, or in the
proper places to which they belong in the system of
religion. This might be easily proved in regard to
the doctrines of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, the
sacrifice of the cross, the necessity of the holy spirit's
assistance: doctrines true, demonstrated, and essential;
but doctrines which will precipitate us from one abyss
to another, if we consider them as our people too often
consider them, and as they have been too often con-
sidered in the schools, in an abstract and detached
manner.

SERMON. manner. The fact then is too certain. Let us attend
 II. to the principal causes of it.

Four principal causes may be assigned: 1. A party spirit. 2. The choice of teachers. 3. A hurry of business. Above all: 4. The love of pleasure. As we shall take the liberty of pointing out the causes of this malady, we shall also prescribe the remedy, whether our most humble remonstrances regard the people, the pastors, or even the sovereign, whose noblest office, as well as most sacred and inviolable duty, it is to watch for the support of the truth, and the government of the church.

I. The first cause that we have assigned is a *Party-spirit*. This is a disposition that cannot be easily defined, and it would be difficult to include in a definition of it even its genus and species: It is a monstrous composition of all bad genuses and of all bad species: It is an hydra that reproduceth while it seemeth to destroy itself, and which, when one head hath been cut off, instantly produceth a thousand more. Sometimes it is superstition, which inclines us to deify certain idols, and, after having formed, to prostrate first before them. Sometimes it is ignorance, which prevents our perceiving the importance of some revealed truths, or the dreadful consequences of some prejudices that we had embraced in childhood. Sometimes it is arrogance, which rashly maintains whatever it hath once advanced; advanced perhaps at first inconsiderately, but which will afterwards be resolutely defended till death, for no other reason but because it hath been once asserted, and because it is too mortifying to yield and say *I am wrong, I was mistaken*. Sometimes it is a spirit of malice and barbarity, which abhors, exclaims against, persecutes, and would even exterminate all who dare contradict its oracular propositions. Oftener still it is the union of all these vices together. A party-spirit is that disposition which invenomis so many hearts, separates so many families, divides so many societies, which hath
 produced

produced so many excommunications, thundered out SERM.
so many anathemas, drawn up so many canons, assembled 1.
for many councils, and hath been so often on the
point of subverting the great work of the reformation,
the noblest opposition that was ever formed
against it.

This spirit, which we have faintly described, must naturally incapacitate a man for considering the whole of religion: it must naturally incline him to take it only by bits and shreds. On the one hand, it contracts the mind: for how can a soul that harboureth and cherisheth all the phantoms which a party-spirit produceth, how can such a soul study and meditate as religion requires? On the other hand, a party-spirit depraves the heart and eradicates the desire of knowing religion. A man animated with the spirit of party directeth all his attention to such propositions of religion as seem to favour his erroneous opinions, and irregular passions, and diverts it from all that oppose them: his system includes only what strengthens his party, it is exclusive of every thing that weakens or opposes it.

This is the first cause of the malady. The remedy is easily discovered. Let us divest ourselves of a party-spirit. Let us never determine an opinion, by its agreement or disagreement with what our masters, our parents, or our teachers have inculcated, but by its conformity or contrariety to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles. Let us never receive or reject a maxim because it favours or opposes our passions, but as it agrees with or opposes the laws of that tribunal, the bases of which are justice and truth. Let us be fully convinced that our chief study should be to know what God determines, and to make his commands the only rules of our knowledge and practice.

2. The second cause of the evil that we would remove is *The choice of teachers*. In general, we have three sorts of teachers. The first are catechists, who
teach

SER M. teach our children the principles of religion. The
 1. second are ministers. The third prepare the minds of young people for the ministry itself.

The carelessness that prevails in the choice of the first sort of teachers cannot be sufficiently lamented. The care of instructing our children is committed to people more fit for disciples than masters, and the meanest talents are thought more than sufficient to teach the first principles of religion. The narrowest and dullest genius is not ashamed to profess himself a divine and a catechist. And yet what capacity does it not require to lay the first foundations of the edifice of Salvation! What address to take the different forms necessary to insinuate into the minds of catechumens, and to conciliate their attention and love! What dexterity to proportion instruction to the different ages and characters of learners! How much knowledge, and how many accomplishments are necessary to discern what is fundamental to a child of twelve, and what is fundamental to a youth of fifteen years of age! What one child of superior talents cannot be ignorant of without danger, and what another of inferior talents may remain innocently unacquainted with! Heads of families, this article concerns you in a particular manner. What account can ye render to God of the children with whom he hath intrusted you, if, while ye take so much pains, and are at so much expence to teach them the liberal arts, and to acquaint them with human sciences, ye discover so much negligence in teaching them the knowledge of salvation? Not only in a future state ought ye to fear the punishment of so criminal a conduct; ye will be punished in this present world. Children ignorant of religion will but little understand their duty to their parents. They will become the cross, as they will be the shame and infamy of your life. They will shake off your yoke as soon as they have passed their childhood, they will abandon you to the weaknesses, infirmities,

infirmities, and disquietudes of old age, when you S E R M.
arrive at that distasteful period of life, which can be I.
rendered agreeable only by the care, the tenderness, and
assiduity of a well-bred son. Let us unite all our en-
deavours, my dear brethren, to remove this evil. Let
us honour an employment which nothing but the
licentiousness of the age could have rendered con-
tempible. Let us consider that, as one of the most
important trusts of the state, one of the most respecta-
ble posts of society, which is appointed to seminate
religious principles in our children, to inspire them
with piety, to guard them against the snares that
they will meet with in the world, and, by these
means, to render them dutiful in childhood, faithful
in conjugal life, tender parents, good citizens, and able
magistrates.

The pastors of our churches are our second class of
teachers. I know, that all *our sufficiency is of God*: that, 2 Cor. iii.
though Paul may plant, and Apollos water, *God only* 5.
giveth the increase: that holy men, considering the end
of the ministry, have exclaimed, *Who is sufficient for* 1 Cor. iii.
these things? Yet, the ordinary means which God useth 6.
for the conversion of sinners are the ministry of the
word, and the qualifications of ministers, for *faith* Rom. x.
cometh by hearing. Now this word, my brethren, is 17.
not preached with equal power by all; and, though
the *foundation* which each lays be the same, it is too
true that some *build upon this foundation the gold and* 1 Cor. iii.
precious stones of a solid and holy doctrine, while others 12.
build with the *wood, hay, and stubble* of their own
errors, the productions of a confused imagination and
a mistaken eloquence. And as the word is not preach-
ed with the same power, so it is not attended with the
same success.

But when the word proceeds from the mouth of a
man whom God hath sealed, and enriched with extra-
ordinary talents, when it proceeds from a man, who
hath *the tongue of the learned and the wisdom of the wise*, Ia. 1. 4.

S E R M. as the scripture speaks: when it proceeds from a *Boanerges*, a son of thunder, from a Moses, *mighty in words*
 I. *and in deeds*, who maintains the dignity of his doctrine
 Mark iii. by the purity of his morals, and by the power of his
 37. good example, then the word is heard with attention;
 Acts vii. from the ear it passeth to the mind, from the mind to
 22. the heart, from the heart to the life: it penetrates, it inflames, it transports. It becomes a *hammer* breaking the hardest hearts, a *two-edged sword*, dividing the father from the son, the son from the father, dissolving all the bonds of flesh and blood, the connections of nature, and the love of self.

What precaution, what circumspection, and, in some sort, what dread ought to prevail in the choice of an office, which so greatly influences the salvation of those among whom it is exercised! There needs only the bad system of a pastor to produce and preserve thousands of false notions of religion in the people's minds: notions, which fifty years labour of a more wise and sensible ministry will scarcely be able to eradicate. There needs only a pastor sold to sordid interest to put up, in some sort, salvation to sale, and to regulate places in paradise according to the diligence or negligence with which the people gratify the avarice of him who distributes them. There needs only a pastor fretted with envy and jealousy against his brethren to poison their ministry, by himself, or by his emissaries. Yea, sometimes, there needs only the want of some less essential talents in a minister to give advantage to the enemies of religion, and to deprive the truths which he preaches of that profound respect which is their due; a respect that even enemies could not withhold, if the gospel were properly preached, and its truths exhibited in their true point of view.

It would be unreasonable perhaps to develop this article now. How many of our people would felicitate themselves if we were to furnish them with pretences for imputing their unfruitfulness to those who cultivate them?

them? But, if this article must not be developed, what S E R M.
grave remonstrances, what pressing exhortations, what I,
tervent prayers should it occasion? Let the heads of
families consider the heinousness of their conduct in
presuming to offer impure victims to the Lord, and
in consecrating those children to the holy ministry, in
whom they cannot but discover dispositions that render
them unworthy of it. May ecclesiastical bodies never
assemble for the election of pastors without making
profound reflections on the importance of the service
in which they are engaged, and the greatness of the
trust which the sovereign commits to them: May they
never ordain without recollecting, that, to a certain
degree, they will be responsible for all the sad conse-
quences of a faithless or a fruitless ministry: May they
always prostrate, on these occasions, before God, as the
apostles in the same case did, and pray, *Lord shew whom* Acts i. 24.
thou hast chosen. May our rulers and magistrates be
affected with the worth of those souls whom the pastors
instruct; and may they unite all their piety, all their
pity, and all their power to procure holy men, who
may adorn so eminent, so venerable a post.

What hath been said on the choice of pastors still
more particularly regards the election of tutors, who
are employed to form pastors themselves. Universities
are public springs, whence rivulets flow into all the
church. Place at the head of these bodies sound phi-
losophers, good divines, wise casuists, and they will
become seminaries of *pastors after God's heart*, who will
form the minds, and regulate the morals of the people,
gently bowing them to the yoke of religion. On the
contrary, place men of another character at the head
of our universities, and they will send out poisoned
ministers, who will diffuse through the whole church
the fatal venom which themselves have imbibed.

3. The third cause, which we have assigned, of the
infancy and noviciate of most christians in religious
knowledge, is the multitude of their secular affairs.

S E R M. Far be it from us to aim at inspiring you with superstitious maxims. We do not mean that they who fill eminent posts in society should devote that time to devotion which the good of the community requires. We allow, that, in some critical conjunctures, the time appointed for devotion must be yielded to business. There are some urgent occasions when it is more necessary to fight than to pray: there are times of important business in which the closet must be sacrificed to the cares of life, and second causes must be attended to even when one would wish to be occupied only about the first. Yet, after all, the duty that we recommend is indispensable. Amidst the most turbulent sollicitudes of life, a christian, desirous of being saved, will devote some time to his salvation. Some part of the day he will redeem from the world and society, to meditate on eternity. This was the practice of those eminent saints, whose lives are proposed as patterns to us. The histories of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and David are well known, and ye recollect those parts of their lives to which we refer, without our detaining you in a repetition now.

The last cause of the incapacity of so many christians for seeing the whole of religion in its connection and harmony: the last cause of their taking it only by bits and shreds, is their love of sensual pleasure. We do not speak here of those gross pleasures at which heathens would have blushed, and which are incompatible with christianity. We attack pleasures more refined, maxims for which reasonable persons become sometimes apologists: persons who, on more accounts than one, are worthy of being proposed as examples: persons who would seem to be *the salt of the earth*, the flower of society, and whom we cannot justly accuse of not loving religion. How rational, how religious soever they appear in other cases, they make no scruple of passing a great part of their time in gaming, in public diversions, in a round of worldly amusements; in pleasures,

tures, which not only appear harmless, but, in some sort, S E R M.
suitable to their rank, and which seem criminal only I.
to those, who think it their duty not to float on the
surface of religion, but to examine the whole that it
requires of men, on whom God hath bestowed the
inestimable favour of revealing it. We may presume,
that, if we shew people of this sort, that this way of
life is one of the principal obstacles to their progress in
religion, and prevents their knowing all its beauties,
and relishing all its delights, we shall not speak with-
out success. In order to this, pardon me if I conjure
you to hear this article, not only with attention, but
with that impartiality which alone can enable you to
know whether we utter our own speculations, or preach
the gospel of Jesus Christ. Recollect here that general
notion of religion which we have laid down: it con-
tains truths of speculation, and truths of practice.
Such sensual pleasures, as we have just now mentioned,
form invincible obstacles to the knowledge of both.

I. To the knowledge of speculative truths. How
is it possible for a man to obtain a complete system of
the doctrines of the gospel while he is a slave to sensual
pleasures?

1. To obtain a complete system of the doctrines of
the gospel there must be a certain habit of thinking
and meditating. In vain ye turn over whole vo-
lumes, in vain ye attend methodical sermons, in vain
ye parade with bodies of divinity, ye can never
comprehend the connection of religious truths unless
ye acquire a habit of arranging ideas, of laying down
principles, of deducing consequences, in short, of
forming systems yourselves. This habit cannot be
acquired without exercise, it is unattainable without
serious attention, and profound application. But how
can people devoted to pleasure acquire such a habit?
Sensual pleasure is an inexhaustible source of dissipa-
tion: it dissipates in preparing, it dissipates in study-
ing, it dissipates after the study is at an end.

2. To

S E R M.

I.

2. To counterbalance the difficulty of meditation and study there must be a relish for it. Those who make study a duty, or a trade, seldom make any great progress in knowledge: at least, a prodigious difference has always been observed between the proficiency of those who study by inclination, and those who study by necessity. But nothing is more capable of disgusting us with the spiritual pleasures of study and meditation than the love of sensual pleasures. We will not intrude into the closets of these persons. But is there not a prodigious difference between their application to study and their attention to pleasure? The one is a violence offered to themselves, the other a voluptuousness after which they sigh. The one is an intolerable burden eagerly shaken off as soon as the time appointed expires: The other is a delicious gratification, from which it is painful to part when nature exhausted can support it no longer, or troublesome duty demands a cessation. In the one, hours and moments are counted, and the happiest period is that which terminates the pursuit: but in the other, time glides away imperceptibly, and people wish for the power of prolonging the course of the day, and the duration of life.

3. To acquire a complete knowledge of religious truths, it is not enough to study them in the closet, in retirement and silence; we must converse with others who study them too. But the love of sensual pleasure indisposes us for such conversations. Slaves to sensual pleasures have but little taste for those delicious societies, whose mutual bond is utility, in which impartial inquirers propose their doubts, raise their objections, communicate their discoveries, and reciprocally assist each other's edification: For, deprive those, who love sensual pleasures, of gaming and diversions, conversation instantly languishes, and converse is at an end.

But, secondly, if the love of sensual pleasure raise
such

such great obstacles to the knowledge of speculative S E R M.
truths, it raiseth incomparably greater still to the truths 1.
of practice. There are some scripture maxims which
are never thought of by the persons in question, except
it be to enervate and destroy them; at least, they make
no part of their system of morality.

In your system of morality, what becomes of this
scripture-maxim, *evil communications corrupt good* 1 Cor. xv.
manners? Nothing forms connections more intimate, 33.
and, at the same time, more extravagant, than an
immoderate love of pleasure. Men, who differ in
manners, age, religion, birth, principles, educations,
are all united by this bond. The passionate and the
moderate, the generous and the avaricious, the young
and the old agree to exercise a mutual condescension
and patience towards each other, because the same
spirit actuates, and the same necessities haunt them;
and because the love of pleasure, which animates
them all, can only be gratified by the concurrence of
each individual.

In your system of morality, what become of those
maxims of scripture, which say that we must *confess* Mat. x.
Jesus Christ before men, that whosoever shall be ashamed 32.
of him before men, of him will he be ashamed when he Mark viii.
cometh in the glory of his father? 38. A man who is en-
gaged in the monstrous assembly which the love of
pleasure forms, must hear religion disputed, the mo-
rality of the gospel attacked, good manners sub-
verted, the name of God blasphemed: and he must
hear all these without daring to discover the senti-
ments of his heart, because, as I just now observed,
patience and compliance animate that body to which
he is attached by such necessary and intimate ties.

In your system of morality, what become of those
scripture-maxims, which threaten those with the great-
est punishments who injure others? The love of
sensual pleasure causeth offences of the most odious
kind; I mean, it betrays your partners in plea-
sure

S E R M. sure into vice. Ye game without avarice; but do
 I. ye not excite avarice in the minds of those who play
 with you? Ye do not injure your families; but do
 ye not occasion other men to injure theirs? Ye are
 guilty of no fraud; but do ye not tempt others to
 be fraudulent?

What become, in your moral system, of those maxims
 of scripture that require us to contribute to the ex-
 Psal. ci. 8. cision of *all wicked doers from the city of the Lord*; to
 discountenance those who commit a crime as well as
 to renounce it ourselves? The love of sensual pleasure
 makes us countenance people of the most irregular
 conduct, whose snares are the most dangerous, whose
 examples are the most fatal, whose conversations are
 the most pernicious to our children and to our fami-
 lies, to civil society and to the church of God.

In your system of morality what become of those
 maxims of scripture which expostulate with us, when
 James iv. the Lord chastiseth us, to *be afflicted and mourn*, to
 9. *bumble ourselves under the mighty hand of God*; to enter
 1 Pet. v. 6. *into our chambers, and shut the doors about us, to hide our-*
 Isai. xxvi. *selves until the indignation be overpast*; to *examine our-*
 20. *selves before the decree bring forth*; to *prepare ourselves*
 Zeph. ii. *to meet our God*; to *bear the rod and who hath appointed*
 3, 2. *it*; to *mourn in sackcloth and ashes*; and, while we
 Amos iv. *feel present miseries, to remember those that are past,*
 12. *tremble for those that are to come, and endeavour by*
 Micah vi. *extraordinary efforts to avert the anger of heaven?*
 9. The love of sensual pleasure turns away people's at-
 tention from all these maxims, and represents those
 who preach them as wild visionaries, or dry declaimers.
 The people of whom we speak, these pious people,
 these people, who love their salvation, these people,
 who pretend to the glory of being proposed for ex-
 amples, can, in times of the deepest distress, when the
 church is bathed in tears, while the arm of God is
 crushing our brethren and our allies, when the same
 terrible arm is lifted over us, when we are threatened
 with

with extreme miseries, when the scourges of God are S E R M.
at our gates, when there needs only the arrival of one I.
ship, the blowing of one wind, the wafting of one
blast, to convey pestilence and plague into our country;
these people can O God! *open their* ^{2 Kings}
eyes that they may see! ^{vi. 17.}

In your system of morality, what become of scripture
exhortations to *redeem the time*, to know *the time of our*
visitation, to do *all that our hands find to do*, because
there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom
in the grave whither we go? The love of pleasure in-
clines mortals, who may die in a few days, people, who
perhaps have only a few days to bid their last adieus,
to embrace their families, to settle their temporal af-
fairs, to examine the neglected parts of religion, to re-
establish the injured reputation of a neighbour, in a
word, to prepare themselves to appear before that ter-
rible tribunal to which death cites them: the love of
sensual pleasure inclines these poor creatures, who have
so short a time to live and so great a task to perform;
the love of sensual pleasure inclines these people to
waste a considerable part of this fleeting life in amuse-
ments, that obliterate both the shortness of life, and
the necessity of death.

How often have we seen old age as greedy of pleasure
as youth? how often have we seen people bow-
ing under the weight of age, how often have we
seen them, even when their trembling hands could
scarcely hold the cards, or the dice, make their feeble
efforts to game; and, when their decayed eyes were
incapable of distinguishing the spots, assist nature by
art, their natural sight with artificial glasses, and thus
consecrate the remains, those precious remains, of life
to gaming, which God had granted for repentance.

All these causes, of the infancy and noviciate of
christians in regard to religion, unite in one, which, in
finishing this discourse, we cannot but lament, nor
can we lament it too much. We do not understand

S E R M. our own religion: we are, most of us, incapable of
 I. perceiving the admirable order, the beautiful symmetry of its component parts. Why? It is because we have so little zeal for our salvation; it is because we form such languid desires to be saved. Indeed I know, that, except some unnatural creatures, except some monsters, to whom this discourse is not addressed, every body professes to desire to be saved, yea, to prefer salvation to whatever is most pompous in the universe, and most pleasant in this life. But, when the attainment of it in God's way is in question, in the only way that agrees with the holiness of his nature to direct, and with our happiness to obey, what a number of people do we meet with whose desires vanish? I desire to be saved, says each to himself, I desire to be saved, but not by such a religion as the gospel prescribes, such as Jesus Christ preached, such as the apostles and ministers of the gospel preach after him; but I desire to be saved by such a religion as I have conceived, such an one as gratifies my passions and caprices. I desire to be saved, but it is on condition, that, while I obey some of the precepts of Jesus Christ, he will dispense with my obedience of others. I desire to be saved: but not on condition of my correcting my prejudices, and submitting them to the precepts of Jesus Christ, but on condition that the precepts of Jesus Christ should yield to my prejudices. I desire to be saved: but on condition of retaining my prepossessions, the system that I have arranged, the way of life that I pursue, and intend to pursue till I die. To desire salvation in this manner is too common a disposition among christians. But to desire salvation in saying to
 Acts ix. 6. God, with a sincere desire of obeying his voice, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Lord, what wilt thou have me to believe? Lord, what wilt thou have me to love? Lord, what inclinations wilt thou have me to oppose, to mortify, to sacrifice? To be willing to be saved in receiving, without exception, all the practical truths,

truths, which compose an essential part of that religion, which God hath given us: Ah! my brethren, how rare is this disposition among christians! S E R M.
1.

Without this disposition however, (and let us not be ingenious to deceive ourselves) without this disposition there is no salvation. It implies a contradiction to say that God will save us in any other way: for as it is contradictory to say that he will give to an equal number the qualities of an unequal number, or to bodies the properties of spirits, or to spirits the properties of bodies; so also is it a contradiction to say that vice shall reap the rewards of virtue, that the highway to hell is the path to paradise.

So that nothing remains in concluding this discourse but to ask you, what are your intentions? What designs have ye formed? What projects do ye resolve to pursue? What are your aims? Have ye any thing more precious than your souls? Can ye conceive a nobler hope than that of being saved? Can ye propose a more advantageous end than your own salvation? Can ye persuade yourselves that there is a greater felicity than the fruition of God? Will ye destroy yourselves? Do ye renounce those delightful hopes that are set before you in the gospel? And shall all the fruit of our ministry be to accuse and confound you before God?

Young man, thou may'st live fifty or sixty years: but at the expiration of those fifty or sixty years, time finishes and eternity begins. People of mature age, your race is partly run; ten, fifteen, or twenty years more, through the dissipations and employments inseparable from your lives, will vanish with an inconceivable rapidity; and then, time finishes and eternity begins with you. And ye old people, a few years, a few months, a few days more, and behold your race is at an end; behold your time finishes and your eternity begins. And can we resist this idea! Alas! what hearts! what christians! what a church!

S E R M.

I.

Grant Almighty God that our prayers may supply the defect of our exhortations; may we derive from thy bosom of infinite mercies what we despair of obtaining from the insensibility of our hearers! O thou author of religion, thou divine spirit, from whom alone could proceed this beautiful system which thou hast condescended to reveal to us, impress it in all its parts on our minds. Pluck up every plant which thy good hand hath not planted. Triumph over all the obstacles that our sins oppose to thine empire. Shut the gulfs of hell. Open the gates of heaven. Save us, even in spite of ourselves. Amen.

To the Father, to the Son, to the holy Ghost; be honor and glory, dominion and power for ever. Amen,

S E R.

S E R M O N II.

The ETERNITY of GOD.

VOL. I.

S. E. R. M. O. N. I.

The ETERNITY of GOD.

Vol. I.

S E R M O N II.

The E T E R N I T Y of G O D.

Preached in the French Church at Rotterdam on the
first Lord's-Day of the Year 1724.

2 PETER iii. 8.

*Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is
with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years
as one day.*

WE could not meditate on the words which you
have heard, my brethren, without recollecting
that miraculous cloud which conducted the Israelites
through the desert. It was all luminous on one side,
and all opaque on the other.* The Jews say that it was
the throne, or the triumphal chariot of that Angel who
marched at the head of the camp of Israel; of that
Angel whom they call the *Prince of the world*, the *Sche-
kinah*, the *presence of the divine Majesty*, the deity itself.
It is not needful to examine this opinion. I do not
know whether the pillar of a cloud were a throne of
God, but it was a beautiful symbol of the deity.
What is the deity in regard to us? If it be the most
radiant of all light, it is at the same time the most co-
vered with darkness. Let the greatest philosophers,
let

* See Rabbi Menachem in Parafch. Beschalec. Exod. xiv. 19.
fol. 63. edit. de Venise 5283. 8.

S E R M. let the most extraordinary geniusses elevate their meditations, and take the loftiest flights of which they are capable, in order to penetrate into the nature of the divine essence, the stronger efforts they make to understand this fearful subject, the more will they be absorbed in it: the nigher they approach the rays of this sun, the more will they be dazzled with its lustre. But yet, let the feeblest and most confined genius seek instructions, in meditating on the divine grandeurs, to direct his faith, to regulate his conduct, and to sweeten the miseries that imbitter this valley of tears; he shall happily experience what the prophet did: *does he look to him? he shall be lightened.*

Pf. xxxiv.
5.

God presents himself to your eyes to-day, as he once presented himself to the Israelites in that marvellous phenomenon. Light on one side, darkness on the other. *A thousand years are with the Lord as one day, and one day as a thousand years.* Let the greatest philosophers, let those extraordinary beings in whose formation God seems to have united an angelic intelligence to a human body, let them preach in our stead, let them fully explain the words of my text. From what abysses of existence does the perfect Being derive that duration, which alike overspreads the present, the future, and the past? how conceive a continuation of existence without conceiving a succession of time? how conceive a succession of time, without conceiving that he who is subject to it acquires what he had not before? how affirm that he who acquires what he had not before, considers *a thousand years as one day, and one day as a thousand years?* So many questions, so many abysses, obscurities, darkneses for poor mortals.

But if ye confine yourselves to a conviction of the truth of the words of my text; particularly, if ye desire to consider them in regard to the influence which they ought to have on your conduct, ye will behold light issuing from every part, nor is there any one in this assembly who may not approach it with confidence.

This

This has encouraged us to turn our attention to a sub-^{S E R M.}ject, which, at first sight, seems more likely to con-^{II.}found, than to edify us.

St. Peter aims to rouse the piety of christians by the idea of that great day wherein the world must be reduced to ashes; when new heavens and a new earth shall appear to the children of God. Libertines regarded that day as a chimera. *Where, said they, is the promise of the Lord's coming: for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?* ^{2 Pet. iii. 4. &c.} The words of my text are an answer to this objection; an idea which we will presently explain, but which ye must, at least in a vague manner, retain all along, if ye mean to follow us in this discourse, in which we would wish to include all the different views of the Apostle. In order to which three things are necessary.

I. We will examine our text in itself, and endeavour to establish this proposition, *That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

II. We will prove what we have advanced: That is, That St. Peter's design in these words was to answer the objections of libertines against the doctrine of the conflagration of the world: and we will shew you that they completely answer the purpose.

III. We will draw from this doctrine, secured against the objections of libertines, such motives to piety as the Apostle presents us with.

In considering these words in this point of light, we will apply them to your present circumstances. The renewal of the year, properly understood, is only the anniversary of the vanity of our life, and thence the calls to detach yourselves from the world. And what can be more proper to produce such a detachment than this reflection, that not only the years which we must pass on earth are consuming, but also that the years of the world's subsistence are already consumed in part, and that the time approaches, in which it must be delivered to the flames and reduced to ashes?

S E R M. Let us first consider the words of our text in themselves, and let us prove this proposition, *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

The notion which I have of God is my principle: The words of my text are the consequence. If I establish the principle, the consequence will be incontestible. 1. *Eternity*.—2. *Perfect knowledge*, and, in some sort, the sight and presence of all that has been, of all that is, and of all that shall be.—3. *Supreme happiness*: are three ideas which form my notion of the deity: this is my principle. *A thousand years then are as one day, and one day as a thousand years with the Lord*: this is my consequence. Let us prove the truth of the principle, by justifying the notion which we form of the deity.

1. God is an *eternal* being. This is not a chimera of my mind; it is a truth accompanied with all the evidence of which a proposition is capable. I exist, I speak, you hear me, at least you seem to hear me. These are facts, the certainty of which all the philosophers in the world can never destroy. I am not able to new mould myself, nor can I help the perception of truths, the knowledge of which (if I may be allowed to say so) is as essential to me as my own existence. It does not depend on me not to regard Pyrrho and Academus, those famous defenders of doubt and uncertainty, as fools who extinguished the light of common sense, or rather as impostors, who pronounced propositions with their mouths, the falsity of which it was impossible their minds should not perceive. I repeat it again, the most subtle objections of all the philosophers in the world united, can never diminish in me that impression which the perception of my own existence makes on my mind, nor hinder my evidence of the truth of these propositions; I exist, I speak, you hear me, at least (for with the people whom I oppose one must weigh each expression, and, in some sort, each syllable) at least I have

I have the same impressions as if there were beings S E R M.
before my eyes who heard me. II.

If I am sure of my own existence, I am no less sure that I am not the author of it myself, and that I derive it from a superior Being. Were I altogether ignorant of the history of the world; if I had never heard that I was only *of yesterday*, as the Psalmist speaks; if I Psal. xc. 4. knew not that my parents, who were born like me, are dead; were I not assured that I should soon die; if I knew nothing of all this, yet I should not doubt whether I owed my existence to a superior Being. I can never convince myself that a creature so feeble as I am, a creature whose least desires meet with insurmountable obstacles, a creature who cannot add *one cubit to his stature*, a creature who cannot prolong Mat. v. his own life one single instant, one who is forced to 27. yield, willing or unwilling, to a greater power which cries to him, *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*: Gen. iii. I can never convince myself that such a creature ex-19. isted from all eternity, much less that he owes his existence only to himself, and to the eminence of his own perfections. It is then sure that I exist: it is also certain that I am not the author of my own existence.

This certainty is all I ask, I ask only these two propositions: I exist, I am not the author of my own existence, to convince me that there is an eternal Being. Yes, though a revelation emanating from the bosom of Omniscience had never given me this idea of the Divinity; though Moses had never pronounced this oracle, *before the mountains were brought forth, or ever* Psal. xc. 2. *thou badst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting thou art God*; though the four and twenty Elders, who surround the throne of God, had never rendered homage to his eternity, or, prostrating before him, incessantly cried, *We give thee thanks, Lord God Al-* Rev. xi. *mighty, which art, and wast, and art to come*; though 17. the eternal Being had never said of himself, *I am Alpha* Rev. i. 8. *and Omega, the first and the last*: Yea, though the
F 2 eternal

S E R M. eternal Being had never convinced me of his grandeur
 H. by the works of his hands, if I had been all alone in the nature of beings, I should have been forced to admit an eternal Being. And this proposition, There is an eternal Being, naturally flows from those, I exist, and I am not the author of my own existence; for if I be not the author of my own existence, I owe it to another Being. That Being to whom I owe my existence, derives his from himself, or, like me, owes it to another. If he exist of himself, behold the eternal Being whom I have been seeking; if he derive his existence from another, I reason about him as about the former. Thus I ascend, thus I am constrained to ascend, 'till I arrive at that Being who exists of himself, and who hath always so existed.

Let such of you, my brethren, as cannot follow this reasoning, blame only themselves. Let not such people say, these are abstruse and metaphysical reflections, which should never be brought into these assemblies. It is not fair that the incapacity of a small number, an incapacity caused by their voluntary attachment to sensible things, and (so to speak) by their criminal interment in matter; it is not right that this should retard the edification of a whole people, and prevent the proposing of the first principles of natural religion. Eternity enters then into the idea of the creative Being; and this is what we proposed to prove.

2. *Omniscience, intimate acquaintance, and, in a manner, the presence of all that is, of all that has been, of all that shall be,* is the second idea which we form of the Deity. The more we meditate on the essence and self-existence of the eternal Being, the more are we convinced that omniscience necessarily belongs to eternity; so that to have proved that God possesses the first of these attributes, is to have proved that he possesses the second. But, as I am certain, that a great number of my hearers would charge those reflections with obscurity, of which they are ignorant only through their own

own inattention, I will not undertake to prove, by a S E R M. chain of propositions, that the eternal Being knows 11. all things; that, as author of all, he knows the nature of all; that, knowing the nature of all, he knows what must result from all. It will be better to give you this subject ready digested in our holy Scriptures, than to oblige you to collect it by your own meditation. Recall then on this article these expressions of the sacred writers. *O Lord, thou knowest all things.*—*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the heart and try the reins.*—*Known unto him are all his works from the beginning.*—*The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight. Some interpreters think, that, by the word of God, we must understand here, not the gospel of Jesus Christ, as the phrase is generally understood, but his person. If this be St. Paul's idea, he uses, methinks, the same metaphysical reasoning which we have proposed: that is, that he who created all, knows all. Observe how this reasoning is followed and developed in the Apostle's words. *The word of God, or, as it is in the Greek, the logos, the word of God is quick and powerful;* that is to say, that as Jesus Christ, as God, hath a fund of life and existence, he hath also freely and effectually communicated life and existence to others. In this sense it is elsewhere said, that by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. And in St. John's Gospel, *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* But this word, quick and powerful, who hath given being to all, perfectly knows all, sharper than

John xxi.

17.

Jer. xvii.

10.

Acts xv.

18.

Heb. iv.

12. &c.

Col. i. 16.

John i.

1. 3.

S E R M. *than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing
 II. asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,
 and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;
 neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight,
 but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him
 with whom we have to do.* Omniscience, intimate
 knowledge, and, as I said before, the presence of all
 that is, of all that was, of all that shall be, are as essential
 to God as eternity. This also, we hope, is sufficiently
 proved.

3. *Supreme felicity* is the third idea which we have
 formed of God; it flows immediately from the two
 first. Every intelligent being is capable of happi-
 ness, nor can he regard happiness with indifference;
 he is inclined by his very nature to render himself
 happy. He cannot love misery as misery; he never
 suffers a present misery but in hopes of a future pleasure;
 or else he supports a misery because it appears to him
 more tolerable than the means proposed to deliver him.
 Even those who have wilfully plunged themselves into
 the gulfs of hell, in a fit of black melancholy, would not
 have taken that dreadful step, had they not revolved this
 melancholy imagination in their distracted minds, that
 the assurance of being plunged into hell is less tolera-
 ble than hell itself. It implies a contradiction, that
 an intelligent being, capable of being happy or mise-
 rable, should be indifferent to his own happiness or
 misery. If any thing be wanting to the felicity of
 God, the defect must not be attributed to his will,
 the cause must be sought in his weakness, that is, in
 his want of power.

But who can conceive that a Being who existed from
 all eternity, who gave existence to all things, and who
 knows all things, hath only a finite and limited power?
 I am well aware of the difficulty of following the at-
 tributes of the Deity, and that, in the greatest part of
 our reasonings on this grand subject, we suppose
 what ought to be proved. But as far as we are
 capable

capable of penetrating this profound subject, we have S E R M.
grounds for reasoning in this manner: God hath given II.
being to all things, and he saw what must result from
them; it depended then entirely on him to form the
plan of the world or not to form it; to be alone or to
impart existence: It depended on him to form the
plan of such a world as we see, or to form another plan.
He hath followed, in the choice which he hath made,
that which was most proper for his own glory. If,
to these feeble speculations, we join the infallible testi-
mony of revelation, we shall find a perfect agreement
with our ideas on this article; that the Creator is the
happy God by excellence, † and that because he is 1 Tim. i.
eternal and omniscient, he must for those very reasons II.
be infinitely happy. This article also is sufficiently
proved.

These three ideas of the Deity are three sources of
proofs, in favour of St. Peter's proposition in the
words of my text, *a thousand years before the Lord are
as one day, and one day as a thousand years.*

God is an eternal Being. Then *a thousand years* 1.
with him are as one day, and one day as a thousand years;
that is to say, *a thousand years and one day* are such in-
considerable measures of duration, that, whatever dis-
proportion they have to each other, they appear to
have none when compared with the duration of eter-
nity. There is a great difference between one drop
of water and the twenty thousand baths which were
contained in that famous vessel in Solomon's temple, 1 Chron.
which, on account of it's matter and capacity, was xviii. 8.
called the *sea of brass*; but this vessel itself, in com-
parison of the sea, properly so called, was so small, that
when we compare all it could contain, with the sea, the
twenty thousand baths, that is, one hundred and sixty
thousand

† Tim. i. 11. *bienheureux dieu, μακάριος Θεός. μακάριος, quasi
μυγα χαίρων, id est, multum et valde gaudens: beatus Deus, qui sibi
sufficiens erat ad beatitudinem. Vide Nov. Test. Græc. cum notis, Lon-
dini, 1768.*

S E R M. thousand pounds weight, appear only as a drop of
 II. water. The extreme difference between that quantity of water and a little drop vanishes when compared with the ocean. One drop of water with the sea is as twenty thousand baths, and twenty thousand baths are as one drop of water. There is a great difference between the light of a taper and that of a flambeau; but expose both to the light of the sun, and their difference will be imperceptible. The light of a little taper before the sun is as the light of a flambeau, and the light of a flambeau as that of a little taper. In like manner, eternal duration is so great an object, that it causeth every thing to disappear that can be compared with it. *A thousand years* are no more before this *than one day*, nor *one day* than *a thousand years*; and these two terms, so unequal in themselves, seem to have a perfect equality when compared with eternity. We, minute creatures, we consider a day, an hour, a quarter of an hour, as a very little space in the course of our lives; we lose without scruple a day, an hour, a quarter of an hour: But we are very much to blame; for this day, this hour, this quarter of an hour, should we even live a whole age, would be a considerable portion of our life. But, if we attend to the little probability of our living a whole age; if we reflect that this little space of time, of which we are so profuse, is the only space we can call our own; if we seriously think that one quarter of an hour, that one hour, that one day is perhaps the only time given us to prepare our accounts, and to decide our eternal destiny; we should have reason to acknowledge, that it was madness to lose the least part of so short a life. But God revolves (if I may venture to say so) in the immense space of eternity. Heap millions of ages upon millions of ages, add new millions to new millions, all this is nothing in comparison of the duration of the eternal Being. In this sense, *a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years.*

God

2. God knows all. Then, *a thousand years are with him as one day, and one day as a thousand years*; because he sees no more in a *thousand years* than in *one day*; because he sees as much in *one day* as he can see in a *thousand years*. Ignorance and uncertainty are the principal causes that make us think a short space of time a long duration; especially, when our ignorance and uncertainty respect things which we ardently desire to know: *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick*, is a saying of the wise man. The very time, in which we are in suspense about an apprehended evil, is insupportable to us. It seems to us, while we expect a fatal sentence, that we are every moment suffering it's execution.

S E R M.
II,
Prov. xiii.
12.

God knows all. He sees all that was, all that is, all that ever will be. The moment which he assigned for the formation of this universe, is as present to his mind as that which he hath determined for it's destruction. He knows the success of the various plans which at present exercise the speculations of the greatest geniusses, and which occasion an infinite number of different opinions among politicians. He knows to what lengths that tyrant, who is the scourge of the whole earth, shall carry his rage. He knows how long that empire shall maintain it's dignity, which at present subsists with so much glory. He knows during what space Antichrist shall yet oppose the dominion of the king Messiah; and when the king Messiah shall make him lick the dust. He knows when the air shall resound with that comfortable exclamation, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit!*

Rev. xviii.
2.

3. In fine, God is supremely happy. Then, *a thousand years with him are as one day, and one day as a thousand years*. In the enjoyment of perfect happiness, the duration of time is imperceptible. Placed, as we are, my dearest brethren, in this valley of miseries, tasting only imperfect and imbittered pleasures, it is very

S E R M. difficult for us to conceive the impression which felicity makes on an intelligence supremely happy. If the enjoyment of some small good make us conceive to a certain degree, a state in which ages appear moments, the miseries inseparable from our lives presently replunge us into a state in which moments appear ages; in which sorrows of the body, and sorrows of the mind, frequently less tolerable than those of the body, so powerfully apply our minds to each indivisible space of time spent in pain, that we think our sufferings have been long, when we have scarcely begun to suffer. But God is always happy, and always supremely happy; he always enjoys that perfect felicity, which makes *a thousand years*, ten thousand millions of years, vanish with an inconceivable rapidity. It would be unhappy not to enjoy this kind of felicity more than ten or twelve millions of years, because the impression which that felicity would make on the soul would be so powerful and lively, that it would render him who enjoyed it insensible to time; time would expire, and he would hardly perceive that he had enjoyed any thing, even when he had possessed happiness as long as I have supposed. God would be unhappy (allow me this expression) if his felicity were not eternal. But this is one of the subjects which must intimidate a preacher through the difficulty he meets with in furnishing matter. We must have ideas beyond human. We must have terms which mankind have not yet invented. We ourselves must have participated the felicity of God; we must speak to men who also had partaken of it; and afterwards, we must have agreed together on a new language to express each idea excited by the happiness, of which we had made so blessed an experience. Represent to yourselves a Being, or rather think, think, my dear hearers, on the difficulty of representing a Being, who, having in the prodigious capacity of his intelligence all possible plans of this universe, hath preferred that which appeared him

him the wisest, the best, and the most conformable to the S E R M.
holiness of his attributes; represent a Being who hath II.
executed this plan, a Being who hath created in this
vast extent which our imagination fancies, in that
which our whole mind, more capable still of conceiv-
ing grand objects than our imagination alone, or our
senses, admires; represent to yourselves a Being who
hath created whatever is most capable of contributing
to perfect felicity; represent a Being who loves, and
who is beloved by, objects worthy of his love; a
Being who knows how to repress the madness of those
who rebel against his empire; a Being who shares his
felicity with spirits whom he esteems, and by whom he
is esteemed above all things; a Being who hath the
pleasure of rendering the objects of his esteem happy,
and who acknowledge that all their happiness comes
from him;——spirits who continually praise the
author of their felicity, and who, casting their crowns
at his feet, incessantly cry, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Isa. vi. 3.*
Hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory. Represent to
yourselves a Being who is approved by intelligences
skilful in virtues, in grandeurs, in objects worthy of
praise; a Being who loves only order, and who hath
power to maintain it; a Being who is at the summit of
felicity, and who knows that he shall be so for ever.
O ages! O millions of ages! O thousands of millions
of ages! O duration the longest that can be ima-
gined by an intelligence composed (if I may speak so)
of all intelligences, how short must ye appear to so
happy a Being! There is no time with him; there is
no measure of time. One thousand years, ten thou-
sand years, one quarter of an hour, one instant, is
almost the same. *A thousand years are with him as one*
day, and one day as a thousand years.

We have considered our text in itself; we will now
shew the end of the Apostle in proposing it, and that
it was very proper to answer that end. This is our
second part.

S E R M. St. Peter, as we said before, St. Peter meant to

- II. refute the odious objections of some profane persons of his own time, who pretended to make the doctrine of an universal judgment doubtful, and who said, in order to obscure it's truth, or enervate it's evidence,

2 Pet. iii. 4. *Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things remain as they were?* I am aware that this comment is disputed, and some have thought that the destruction of Jerusalem was the subject of this whole chapter, and not the end of the world; but, however averse we are to the decisive tone, we will venture to demonstrate that the Apostle had far greater objects in view than the fatal catastrophes of the Jewish nation. This I think clearly appears,

1. By the nature of the objection which libertines made. *Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things remain as they were?* These libertines did not mean that from the beginning of the world the commonwealth of Israel had suffered no considerable alteration; they did not mean from that false principle, to draw this false consequence, that Jerusalem would always remain as it then was. How could they be such novices in the history of their nation, as not to know the sad vicissitudes, the banishments, and the plunderings, which the Jews had undergone? They meant, that, though some particular changes had happened in some parts of the world, the generality of creatures had always remained in the same state; thence they pretended to conclude that they would always remain so.

2. This appears farther by the manner in which the Apostle answers them in the verses preceding the text. He alledges against them the example of the deluge. *This, says he, they are willingly ignorant of, that the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.* To this he adds, *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the things that are therein shall burn*

burnt up. On which we reason thus: The world, SER.M.
that was formerly destroyed with water, is the same 11.
which shall be destroyed by fire; but the world that
was destroyed with water, was not the Jewish nation
only: St. Peter then predicts a destruction more
general than that of the Jews.

3. This appears farther by this consideration. The
people to whom St. Peter wrote did not live in Judæa,
but were dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Cappa-
docia, Asia, and Bithynia. These people could have
but little to do with the destruction of Jerusalem.
Whether Jesus Christ terminated the duration of that
city suddenly or slowly, was a question that regarded
them indirectly only; but the day of which St. Peter
speaks interests all Christians, and St. Peter exhorts all
Christians to prepare for it, as being personally con-
cerned in it.

4. Add a fourth consideration, taken from what fol- Ver. 15, 16.
lows our text: *Even as our beloved brother Paul also*
speaks of these things, in which are some things hard to be
understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable,
wrest unto their own destruction. What are these things
hard to be understood? Many interpreters, ancient and
modern, have thought that the doctrine of justification
was intended; a doctrine established by St. Paul, and
wrested by many to their own destruction, as from thence
they concluded that good works were useless. But,
methinks, it is more probable that St. Peter designs 1 Thes. iv.
some parts of the first epistle to the Thessalonians, where 13, &c. &
the Apostle had spoken as if the day of judgment was v. 1, &c.
very nigh; and from which many concluded that it
would immediately appear, and the mistake caused a
general subversion of society. Since then, St. Paul
had spoken of the day of judgment, and St. Peter *speaks*
of the same things, it follows, that St. Peter designed to
establish the truth of a general judgment, against those
infidels who had endeavoured to subvert it.

• But how is what the Apostle says, *one day is with the*
Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;
how

S. E. R. M. how is such a proposition proper to refute the odious
 II. objection of infidels, who said, *Where is the promise of his coming?* If a man who possesseth great riches promise a small sum to an indigent person, if he defer the fulfilment of his promise, in vain ye endeavour to exculpate him by saying, the promiser is so opulent that a small sum with him is as great riches, and great riches are as a small sum.

In like manner, to say that *a thousand years with God are as one day, and one day as a thousand years*, is that to answer the objection? The question is not what the time of delay is to the eternal Being; the question is, what that time is to poor mortals, who are confined to the earth, loaded with miseries, and to whom one day is as a thousand years, and not a thousand years as one day.

This difficulty is solved by the connection of our text with the following verses: *Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* This answer is conclusive, as ye will more fully perceive by the following paraphrase. The delay of the day of judgment may be considered either in relation to men who must be judged, or to God himself who will judge them. If ye consider it in regard to men who must be judged, they have no room to complain that God defers this important period; on the contrary, they ought to consider the pretended slackness of which they complain, as an effect of the adorable love of their judge, who invites them to conversion. The manner in which God ordinarily takes men out of this life, is much more proper to incline them to conversion than the terrible retinue of his coming to judgment. How terrible will his appearance be! What eye will not be dazzled? Whose conscience will

will not be alarmed? Here blow the trumpets, the dreadful sounds of which proclaim the approach of the Judge of this universe. There, the heavens, which once opened to receive the Son of God, open again that he may return to the earth, to execute his threatenings on rebellious men. Here, earth and sea restore the bodies which they have devoured. There, those *thousand thousands*, those *ten thousand times ten thousand*, who are continually *before God*, offer their ministry to him, and are the witnesses, admirers, and executors of his judgment. Here, open the eternal books, in which so many unrighteous thoughts, so many unprofitable words, so many criminal actions have been registered. There, sentences are preparing, destinies determining, final decrees just pronouncing. Who then could have presence of mind enough to recur to genuine repentance, even supposing there were yet time for repentance? Men then have no reason to complain that the day of judgment is not yet come. *The Lord is patient towards all men, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

If ye consider the pretended delay of judgment in regard to God, as ye have considered it in regard to men, ye will readily acknowledge that what appears delay to you, does not appear so to him. Why? Because *a thousand years are with him as one day, and one day as a thousand years*; because this long term that offends you is but as an instant to the perfect Being.

It seems to me that this reasoning is conclusive. This shall suffice for the present. Let us conclude, and let us employ the few moments which remain, to infer from the doctrine of the general conflagration, secured against the objections of libertines, such motives to piety as the Apostle intended we should draw from them. *Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering*

SERMON. to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that
 11. all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord
 will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens
 shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall
 melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that
 are therein shall be burnt up. This is the doctrine that
 the Apostle establisheth. Seeing then that all these things
 shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be
 in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting
 unto the coming of the day of God? This is the con-
 sequence which he deduces; the justness of which
 inference will appear by five descriptions, which the
 general conflagration traces before our eyes: 1. A
 description of the power of our Judge: 2. A de-
 scription of the horrors of vice: 3. A description of
 the vanity of the present world: 4. A description of
 the beauties of the world to come: 5. A description
 of the excellence of piety. This is the third part, and
 the conclusion of this discourse.

1. The destruction of the universe affords us a picture
 of the power of our Judge. How powerful, my
 Rom. ix. 19. brethren, is this judge! *Who can resist his will?* Once
 there was no sea, no earth, no firmament; one fright-
 ful night covered the whole face of the universe. He
 Gen. i. 3. said, and all these beings appeared: Now we behold a
 sea, an earth, and a firmament. *He will say, and the*
sea shall be dry, the earth shall be consumed, the stars
shall disappear, the firmament shall be found no more.
 Such is the God whom the sinner attacks. A God,
 Isa. xl. 15. *who taketh up the isles as a very little thing. A God*
who removeth the mountains and overturneth them in
his anger, who shaketh the earth out of her place, and
the pillars thereof tremble. A God, who commandeth the
 Job. ix. 5, 6, 7, 10. *sun and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars; who doth*
great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without
number. This, sinner, is the God whom thou attackest.
 But doth' the idea of a God so powerful never ex-
 cite terror in thy rebellious soul? Do we provoke the
 1 Cor. x. 22. Lord

Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?—Who hath S E R M.
hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?—Can II.
any resist my power? Who would set the thorns and briars Job ix. 4.
against me in battle? I would go through them, I would Isa. xxvii.
burn them together. O let them make peace with me, 4, 5.
and they shall make peace with me.

2. The conflagration of the universe affords us a picture of the horrors of vice. Behold how far God carries his resentment against sin. It is not enough to condemn to eternal flames, and to confine in chains of darkness, those who have fled from his justice. It is not enough to pour out his wrath upon those who have committed the crime, he detests even the instruments of the crime; he designs that all things that have served sin shall bear the marks of his anger. If, under the law, Lev. xx.
 a man had defiled himself with a beast, he must die with 15, 16.
 the brutal object of his passion. Thus God, not content to punish the avaricious with unquenchable fire, will destroy even objects of avarice, and dissolve the gold and silver with which the miser committed idolatry. Not content to punish the ambitious, he will destroy even the instruments of ambition, and overturn those thrones and palaces which have caused it. Not content to punish the voluptuous, he will destroy even objects of voluptuousness, and consume the heavens, the earth, and the elements, which have afforded matter for concupiscence. Heavens, earth, elements, are ye guilty? But, if ye be treated with so much rigour for having been the unconscious instruments of the crime, what must the condition of the criminal be?

3. In the burning of the universe we find a representation of the vanity of the present world. What is this world which fascinates our eyes? It is a funeral pile that already begins to burn, and will soon be entirely consumed; it is a world which must end; and all that must end is far inferior to an immortal soul. The thought of death is already a powerful motive to us to place our affections on another world; for what

S E R M. is death? it is to every individual what, one day, the final
 11. ruin will be to the generality of mankind; it is the destruction of the heavens, which *pass away with a great noise*; it is the dissolution of elements; it is the entire conflagration of the world, and of *the works which are therein*. Yet vanity hath invented refuges against this storm. The hope of an imaginary immortality hath been able to support some men against the fear of a real death. The idea of existing, in the minds of those who exist after them, hath, in some sort, comforted them under the miserable thought of being no more. Hence pompous buildings, and stately edifices; hence rich monuments, and superb mausoleums; hence proud inscriptions and vain-glorious titles, inscribed on marble and brass. But behold the dissolution of all those bonds. The destruction of the world deprives us of our imaginary being, as death deprives us of our real existence. Ye will not only be shortly stretched in your tombs, and cease to use the houses, and fields, and palaces which ye inhabit; but these houses, these palaces, these fields will be consumed, and the memory of all that is fastened to the world will vanish with the world. Since then, this is the condition of all sensible things, since all these sensible things must perish, immortal man, infinite spirit, eternal soul, dost thou fasten thyself to vanity and instability? Dost thou not seek for a good more suitable to thy nature and duration? *seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?*

4. The conflagration of the universe furnisheth a description of the world to come. Ye often hear us declaim on the nothingness of earthly things; we frequently diminish the worth of all that is great and glorious; we frequently cry with Solomon, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*: Vanity in pleasures, vanity in grandeurs, vanity in riches, vanity in sciences, vanity in all. But yet, my brethren, how substantial would this

this vanity be, how amiable would this nothingness appear, if, by a happy assemblage of all that the world hath of the beautiful, we could acquire the reality of a life, of which it is easy to form to one's self the ideal. Could I extract the choicest dignities and fortunes; could I inhabit the most temperate clime, and the most pleasant country; could I chuse the most benevolent hearts, and the wisest minds; could I take the most happy temper, and the most sublime genius; could I cultivate the sciences, and make the fine arts flourish; could I collect and unite all that could please the passions, and banish all that could give pain. A life formed on this plan, how likely to please us! How is it, that God, who hath resolved to render us, one day, happy, doth not allow us to continue in this world, and content himself with uniting all these happy circumstances in our favour? *It is good to be here:* O that he would allow us here to build our *tabernacles*. Ah! my brethren, a life formed on this plan might indeed answer the ideas of happiness which feeble and finite geniusses form, but such a plan cannot even approach the designs of an infinite God. A life formed on this plan might indeed exhaust a terrestrial love, but it could never reach the love of an infinite God. No, all the charms of this society, of this fortune, and of this life; no, all the softness of these climates, and of these countries; no, all the benevolence of these hearts, and all the friendship of these minds; no, all the happiness of this temper, and all the sublimity of this genius; no, all the secrets of the sciences, and all the discoveries of the fine arts; all the attractions of these societies, and all the pleasures of the passions, have nothing, I do not say which exhausts the love of God in Jesus Christ, I do not say which answers, I venture to say which approaches it. To accomplish this love there must be another world; there must be new heavens and a new earth; there must be objects far more grand.

S E R M.
II.

Mat. xvii.

S E R M. Finally, the destruction of the universe displays the excellence of piety. O that I could represent the be-

II. liever amidst fires, flames, winds, tempests, the confusion of all nature, content, peaceable, unalterable! O that I could represent the heavens passing away, the elements dissolving with fervent heat, the earth and the things which are in it burning up; and the believer, that man, that inconsiderable man, little by his nature, but great by the privileges with which piety endows him, without suspicion, rising fearless above all the catastrophes of the universe, and surviving it's ruins! O

Mat. xxiv. 30. that I could describe the believer, while all *the tribes of the earth mourn and smite their breasts*; while the wicked

Luke xxi. 26. despair exhales in these dreadful howlings, *Mountains fall on us, hills cover us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the face of the lamb!* O that I could

Rev. vi. 16. describe the believer assured, triumphant, founded on the rock of ages *hasting unto the coming of the day of God*, as our Apostle expresseth it; aiming with transports of joy which we cannot express, (O may we one day experience these transports!) aiming to approach the presence of Jesus Christ, as his tenderest friend and deliverer, literally proving the truth of this promise,

Isai. xliii. 2. *when thou passest through the waters they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt.* O that I could represent him crying, *Come,*

Rev. xxii. 20. *Lord Jesus, come quickly; come, receive a creature once defiled with sin; sometimes even rebellious, yet always having, at the bottom of his heart, principles of love to thee; but now ravished with transports of joy, because he is entering an œconomy, in which he shall be always submissive, and always faithful.*

What shall I say to you, my dear brethren, to incline you to piety, if all these grand motives be without success? if the words of my text, if the voice of an Apostle,—what do I say the voice of an Apostle? If the *sun darkened*, if the *moon changed into blood*, if the
stars

stars fallen from Heaven, if the powers of heaven shaken, S E R M.
 if the heavens passing away with a great noise, if the II.
 elements dissolving with fervent heat, if the earth consumed
 with all that is therein, if the universal destruction of
 nature and elements be incapable of loosening and de-
 taching you from the present world.

It is said, that, some days before the destruction of Jerusalem, a voice was heard proceeding from the holy place, and crying, *Let us go hence, let us go hence.** My brethren, such a voice addresses you. We ground our exhortations to day, not on the destruction of one people only; we preach (if I may be allowed to say so) in sight of the ruins of this whole universe: Yes, from the centre of the trembling world and crashing elements, a voice sounds, *Let us go hence*; let us quit the world; give our hopes more solid bases than in-kindled worlds, which will shortly be burnt up. And then, pass away heavens with a great noise, consume elements, burn earth with all thy works, perish universe, perish nature, our felicity is above all such catastrophes, we cleave to the God of ages, to God who is the source of existence and duration, to God before whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. O Lord, of old hast thou laid the founda- Pr. cii. 26,
 tion of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine &c.
 hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou, thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee. God grant we may experience these great promises! To him be honour and glory. Amen.

* Josephus de Bell. Jud. lib. vi. cap. 31.

S E R M O N III.

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF G O D.

Isaiah LXXXIII. 1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 15.

S E R M O N III.

The OMNIPRESENCE of G O D.

Vol. I.

S E R M O N I I I

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S E R M O N III.

The OMNIPRESENCE of G O D.

PSALM CXXXIX. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

COULD I have one wish, to answer my proposed end of preaching to-day with efficacy, Christians, it should be to shew you God in this assembly. Moses had such an advantage, no man therefore ever spoke with greater success. He gave the law to the people in God the legislator's presence. He could say, This law which I give you proceeds from God; here is his throne, there is his lightning, yonder is his thunder. Accordingly, never were a people more struck with a legislator's voice. Moses had hardly begun to speak, but, at least for that moment, all hearts were united, and all Sinai echoed with one voice, crying, *All that thou hast spoken we will do.* Exod. xix. 3.

But in vain are our sermons drawn from the sacred sources; in vain do we say to you, *Thus saith the Lord:*

S E R M. ye see only a man; ye hear only a mortal voice in this
 III. pulpit; God hath put his *treasure into earthen vessels*,
 2 Cor. iv. and our auditors estimating the treasure by the mean-
 7. ness of the vessel, instead of supporting the meanness
 of the vessel for the sake of the treasure, hear us with-
 out respect, and, generally, derive no advantage from
 the ministry.

But were God present in this assembly, could we
 shew you the Deity amongst you, authorizing our voice
 by his approbation and presence, and examining with
 what dispositions ye hear his word, which of you,
 which of you my brethren, could resist so eminent and
 so noble a motive?

John iv.
 24.

Christians, this idea is not destitute of reality: God
 is every where; he is in this church. Vails of flesh
 and blood prevent your sight of him; these must fall,
 and ye must open the eyes of your spirits, if ye would
 see a God, who is a *spirit*. Hear our prophet; hear
 his magnificent description of the immensity and om-
 nipresence of God. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
 or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up
 into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell,
 behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning,
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: even thence
 shall thy band lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night
 shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from
 thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and
 the light are both alike to thee.*

In a text less abundant in riches, we might make
 some remarks on the terms *spirit*, and *presence*; but we
 will content ourselves at present with indicating what
 ideas we affix to them, by observing, that by the *spirit*
 and *presence* of God, we understand God himself. I
 know, some divines discover great mysteries in these
 terms, and tell us that there are some passages in
 scripture where the word *presence* means the second
 person in the most holy Trinity, and where the term
spirit

Spirit is certainly to be understood of the third. But S E R M. III. as there are some passages where these terms have not this signification, it is beyond all doubt that this, which we are explaining, is precisely of the latter kind. But however, if any dispute our comment, we shall leave them to dispute it; for it would be unjust to consume that time, which is dedicated to the edification of a whole congregation, in refuting a particular opinion. The other expressions in our text, *heaven, bell; the wings of the morning*, a figurative expression denoting the rapidity of the light in communicating itself from one end of the world to the other; these expressions, I say, need no comment. The *presence* of God, the *spirit* of God, signify then the divine essence: and this assemblage of ideas, *whither shall I go from thy spirit? whither shall I flee from thy presence?* means, that God is immense, and that he is present in every place.

But wherein consists this immensity and omnipresence? If ever a question required developing, this certainly does; not only because it presents to the mind an abstract subject, which does not fall under the observation of the senses, but because many who have treated this matter (pardon an opinion which does not proceed from a desire of opposing any individual, but only from a love to the truth) many who have handled the subject, have contributed more to perplex, than to explain it. We may observe, in general, that, unless we be wholly unacquainted with the history of the sciences, it is impossible not to acknowledge, that all questions about the nature of spirits, all that are any way related to metaphysics, were very little understood before the time of that celebrated philosopher, whom God seems to have bestowed on the world to purify reason, as he had some time before raised up others to purify religion. †

What heaps of crude and indigested notions do we find, among the schoolmen, of the immensity of God?

I 2

One

† The philosopher intended by Mr. S. I suppose, is his countryman *Descartes*, born in 1596. *Vie de Desc. par Baillet.*

S E R M. One said, that God was a point, indivisible indeed, but
 III. a point, however, that had the peculiar property of occupying every part of the universe. Another, that God was the place of all beings, the immense extent in which his power had placed them. Another, that his essence was *really* in heaven, but yet, *repletively*, as they express it, in every part of the universe. In short, this truth hath been obscured by the grossest ignorance. Whatever aversion we have to the decisive tone, we will venture to affirm, that people who talked in this manner of God, had no ideas themselves of what they advanced.

Do not be afraid of our conducting you into these wild mazes; do not imagine that we will busy ourselves in exposing all these notions for the sake of labouring to refute them. We will content ourselves with giving you some light into the omnipresence of God:

I. By removing those false ideas, which, at first, seem to present themselves to the imagination;

II. By assigning the true.

I. Let us remove the false ideas, which, at first, present themselves to the imagination; as if, when we say that God is present in any place, we mean that he is actually contained therein; as if, when we say that God is in every place, we mean to assign to him a real and proper extension. Neither of these is designed; and, to remove these ideas, my brethren, two reflections are sufficient.

God is a spirit. A spirit cannot be in a place, at least in the manner in which we conceive of place.

1. God is a spirit. What relation can ye find between wisdom, power, mercy, and all the other attributes which enter into your notion of the divinity, and the nature of bodies? Pulverise matter, give it all the different forms of which it is susceptible, elevate it to its highest degree of attainment, make it vast, and immense; moderate, or small; luminous, or obscure; opaque, or transparent; there will never result any thing but figures,

figures, and never will ye be able, by all these combinations, or divisions, to produce one single sentiment, one single thought, like that of the meanest and most contracted of all mankind. If matter then cannot be the subject of one single operation of the soul of a mechanic, how should it be the subject of those attributes which make the essence of God himself? S E R M.
III.

But perhaps God, who is spiritual in one part of his essence, may be corporeal in another part, like man, who, although he hath a spiritual soul, is yet united to a portion of matter? No; for, however admirable in man that union of spiritual and sensible may be, and those laws which unite his soul to his body, nothing more fully marks his weakness and dependence, and consequently nothing can less agree with the divine essence. Is it not a mark of the dependence of an immortal and intelligent soul, to be enveloped in a little flesh and blood, which, according to their different motions, determine his joy or sorrow, his happiness or misery? Is it not a mark of the weakness of our spirits to have the power of acting only on that little matter, to which we are united, and to have no power over more? Who can imagine that God hath such limits? He hath no body; he is united to none; yet he is united to all. That celebrated philosopher, shall I call him? or atheist,* who said that the assemblage of all existence constituted the divine essence, who would have us consider all corporeal beings as the body of the divinity, published a great extravagance, if he meant that the divine essence consisted of this assemblage. But there is a very just sense, in which it may be said that the whole universe is the body of the deity. In effect, as I call this portion of matter my body, which I move, act and direct as I please, so God actuates by his will every part of the universe: he ob-

scures

* Mr. S. means, I should suppose, Spinoza: whose system of atheism, says a sensible writer, is more gross, and therefore less dangerous, than others: his poison carrying its antidote with it.

S E R M. scures the sun, he calms the winds, he commands the
III. sea. But this very notion excludes all corporiety from

God, and proves that God is a spirit. If God sometimes represents himself with feet, with hands, with eyes, he means in these portraits, rather to give us emblems of his attributes, than images (properly speaking) of any parts which he possesseth. Therefore, when he attributes these to himself, he gives them so vast an extent, that, we easily perceive, they are not to be grossly understood. Hath he hands? they are hands

Isa. xl. 12.

which weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, which measure the waters in the hollow of his hand, and mete out the heavens with a span. Hath he eyes? they are eyes that penetrate the most unmeasurable distances. Hath he feet? they are feet which reach

Isa. lvi. 1.

from heaven to earth, for the heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool. Hath he a voice? it is as the

Psa. xxix.

3, 5, 6, 9.

sound of many waters, breaking the cedars of Lebanon, making mount Sirion skip like an unicorn, and the binds to carve.

This reminds me of a beautiful passage in Plato. He says that the gods, particularly the chief good, the ineffable beauty, as he calls him, cannot be conceived of but by the understanding only, and by quitting sensible objects; that, in order to contemplate the divinity, terrestrial ideas must be surmounted; that the eyes cannot see him; that the ears cannot hear him. A thought which Julian the apostate, a great admirer of that philosopher, so nobly expresses in his satire on the Cæsars. Thus every thing serves to establish our first principle, that God is a spirit.

2. But to prove that God is a spirit, and to prove that he occupies no place, at least as our imagination conceives, is, in our opinion, to establish the same thesis.

I know how difficult it is to make this consequence intelligible and clear, not only to those who have never been accustomed to meditation, and who are therefore more

more excusable for having confused ideas; but even to S E R M.
such as, having cultivated the sciences, are most intent III.
on refining their ideas. I freely acknowledge, that after
we have used our utmost efforts to rise above sense and
matter, it will be extremely difficult to conceive the
existence of a spirit, without conceiving it in a certain
place. Yet, I think, whatever difficulty there may be
in the system of those who maintain that an immaterial
being cannot be in a place, properly so called, there
are greater difficulties still in the opposite opinion: for
what is immaterial hath no parts; what hath no parts
hath no form; what hath no form hath no extension;
what hath no extension can have no situation in place,
properly so called. For what is it to be in place? is
it not to fill space, is it not to be adjusted with sur-
rounding bodies? how adjust with surrounding bodies
without parts? how consist of parts, without being
corporeal? But if ye ascribe a real and proper extension
to a spirit, every thought of that spirit would be a se-
parate portion of that extension, as every part of the
body is a separate portion of the whole body: every
operation of spirit would be a modification of that ex-
tension, as every operation of body is a modification of
body; and, were this the case, there would be no absur-
dity in saying that a thought is round, or square, or
cubic, which is nothing less than the confounding of
spirit with matter. Thus the idea which our imagina-
tion forms of the omnipresence of God, when it repre-
sents the essence of the Supreme Being filling infinite
spaces, as we are lodged in our houses, is a false idea,
that ought to be carefully avoided.

II: What notions then must we form of the im-
mensity of God? in what sense do we conceive that
the infinite spirit is every where present? My brethren,
the bounds of our knowledge are so strait, our sphere
is so contracted, we have such imperfect ideas of spirits,
even of our own spirits, and, for a much stronger rea-
son, of the Father of spirits, that no genius in the
world,

SER M. world, however exalted ye may suppose him, after his
 111. greatest efforts of meditation, can say to you, Thus far extend the attributes of God; behold a compleat idea of his immensity and omnipresence. Yet, by the help of sound reason, above all, by the aid of revelation, we may give you, if not compleat, at least distinct ideas of the subject: it is possible, if not to indicate all the senses in which God is immense, at least to point out some: it is possible, if not to shew you all the truth, at least to discover it in part.

Let us not conceive the omnipresence of God as a particular attribute (if I may venture to say so) of the deity, as goodness or wisdom, but as the extent or infinity of many others. The omnipresence of God is that universal property by which he communicates himself to all, diffuses himself through all, is the great director of all, or, to confine ourselves to more distinct ideas still, the infinite spirit is present in every place.

1. By a boundless knowledge.
2. By a general influence.
3. By an universal direction.

God is every where, because he *seeth* all, because he *influenceth* all, because he *directeth* all. This we must prove and establish. But if ye would judge rightly of what ye have heard, and of what ye may still hear, ye must remember that this subject hath no relation to your pleasures, nor to your policy, nor to any of those objects which occupy and fill your whole souls; and consequently, that if ye would follow us, ye must stretch your meditation, and go, as it were, out of yourselves.

1. The first idea of God's omnipresence is his *omniscience*. God is every where present, because he *seeth* all. This the prophet had principally in view. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
 For

Verſes 1, 2,
 3, &c.

For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, SERM.
 thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and III.
 before. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is
 high, I cannot attain unto it. Then follow the words
 of our text: *Whither shall I go from thy spirit; and*
so on.

Let us not then consider the deity, after the example
 of the schoolmen, as a point fixed in the universality of
 beings. Let us consider the universality of beings as
 a point, and the deity as an immense eye, which sees
 all that passes in that point, all that can possibly pass
 there; and which, by an all-animating intelligence,
 makes an exact combination of all the effects of
 matter, and of all the dispositions of spirit.

I. God knows all the effects of matter. An expert
 workman takes a parcel of matter proportioned to a
 work which he meditates, he makes divers wheels,
 disposes them properly, and sees, by the rules of his
 art, what must result from their assemblage. Suppose
 a sublime, exact genius, knowing how to go from
 principle to principle, and from consequence to con-
 sequence, after foreseeing what must result from two
 wheels joined together, should imagine a third, he will
 as certainly know what must result from a third, as
 from a first and second; after imagining a third, he
 may imagine a fourth, and properly arrange it with
 the rest in his imagination; after a fourth a fifth, and
 so on to an endless number. Such a man could ma-
 thematically demonstrate, in an exact and infallible
 manner, what must result from a work composed of
 all these different wheels. Suppose farther, that this
 workman, having accurately considered the effects
 which would be produced on these wheels, by that
 subtil matter which in their whirlings continually sur-
 rounds them, and which, by its perpetual action and
 motion, chafes, wears, and dissolves all bodies; this
 workman would tell you, with the same exactness, how
 long each of these wheels would wear, and when the

SEK M. whole work would be consumed. Give this workman life and industry proportional to his imagination, furnish him with materials proportional to his ideas, and he will produce a vast, immense work, all the different motions of which he can exactly combine; all the different effects of which he can evidently foresee. He will see, in what time motion will be communicated from the first of these wheels to the second, at what time the second will move the third, and so of the rest: he will foresee all their different motions, and all the effects which must result from their different combinations.

Hitherto this is only supposition, my brethren, but it is a supposition that conducts us to the most certain of all facts. This workman is God. God is this sublime, exact, infinite genius. He calls into being matter, without motion, and, in some sense, without form. He gives this matter form and motion. He makes a certain number of wheels, or rather he makes them without number. He disposes them as he thinks proper. He communicates a certain degree of motion agreeable to the laws of his wisdom. Thence arises the world which strikes our eyes. By the fore-mentioned example, I conceive, that God, by his own intelligence, saw what must result from the arrangement of all the wheels that compose this world, and knew, with the utmost exactness, all their combinations. He saw that a certain degree of motion, imparted to a certain portion of matter, would produce water; that another degree of motion, communicated to another portion of matter, would produce fire; that another would produce earth, and so of the rest. He foresaw, with the utmost precision, what would result from this water, from this fire, from this earth when joined together, and agitated by such a degree of motion as he should communicate. By the bare inspection of the laws of motion, he foresaw fires, he foresaw shipwrecks, he foresaw earthquakes, he foresaw all the vicissitudes of time, he

he foresaw those which must put a period to time, *when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the earth with all the works that are in it shall be burnt up.* S. R. M. III. 2 Peter-iii. 10.

2. But, if God could combine all that would result from the laws of motion communicated to matter, he could also combine all that would result from intelligence, freedom of will, and all the faculties which make the essence of spirits; and, before he had formed all those spiritual beings which compose the intelligible world, he knew what all their ideas, all their projects, all their deliberations would for ever be.

I am aware, that a particular consequence, which follows this doctrine, hath made some divines exclaim against this thesis, and, under the specious pretence of exculpating the deity from the entrance of sin into this world, they have affirmed that God could not foresee the determinations of a free agent; for, say they, had he foreseen the abuse which man would have made of his liberty, in resolving to sin, his love to holiness would have engaged him to prevent it. But to reason in this manner is, in attempting to solve a difficulty, to leave that difficulty in all its force.

All that they say, on this article, proceeds from this principle, that a God infinitely just, and infinitely powerful, ought to display (if it be allowable to say so) all the infinity of his attributes to prevent sin. But this principle is notoriously false. Witness that very permission of sin which is objected to us. Ye will not acknowledge that God foresaw man's fall into sin; acknowledge, at least, that he foresaw the possibility of man's falling, and that, in forming a creature free, he knew that such a creature might choose virtue or vice; acknowledge, at least, that God could have created man with so much knowledge, and could have afforded him so many succours; he could have presented such powerful motives to holiness incessantly, and discovered to him the dreadful consequences of his rebellion so effectually;

S E R M. effectually; he could have united obedience to his
 III. commands with so many delights, and the most distant
 thought of disobedience with so many disgusts; he
 could have banished from man every temptation to sin,
 so that he would never have been a sinner. Yet God
 created man in another manner; consequently it is not
 true, even in your system, that God hath exerted all
 the power he could to prevent sin's entrance into the
 world. Consequently it is false, that a being, who per-
 fectly loves holiness, ought to display the whole extent
 of his attributes to prevent sin, and to establish virtue.
 Consequently, the principle, on which ye ground your
 denial of God's comprehension of all the dispositions
 of spirits, is an unwarrantable principle, and to attempt
 to solve the difficulty, in this manner, is to leave it in
 all its force.

But, if ye consult revelation, ye will find that God
 claims an universal knowledge of spirits. He says
 that he *searcheth and knoweth them*. He foresaw, he
 foretold, the afflictions which Abraham's posterity
 would endure in Canaan, the hardening of Pharaoh,
 the infidelity of the Jews, the faith of the Gentiles,
 the crucifixion of the Messiah, the coming of the *prince*
 or leader, that is of Vespasian, or Titus, who would
destroy the city and the sanctuary. And consequently,
 we have a right to affirm that God knows all the
 thoughts of the mind, and all the sentiments of the
 heart, as well as that he knows all the motions of
 matter.

Perhaps ye wish, my brethren, that our speculations
 were carried farther; perhaps ye would have us disin-
 tangle the subject from all its difficulties; perhaps ye
 wish we could make you comprehend, in a clear and
 distinct manner, how it is possible that such immense
 objects can be always present to the Supreme Intelli-
 gence? but what mortal mouth can express such sub-
 lime truths, or what capacity is able to conceive them!
 On this article, we are obliged with our prophet to
 exclaim,

Jer. xvii.

10.

Rev. ii.

23.

Gen. xv.

13.

Exod. iii.

19.

Dan. ix.

25, 26.

exclaim, *such knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is* S E R M. *high: I cannot attain unto it!* In general, we conceive III. that the sphere of divine knowledge is not contracted Verse 6. by any of the limits that confine the spirits of mankind.

The human spirit is united to a portion of matter. Man can perform no operation without the agitation of his brain, without the motion of his animal spirits, without the help of his senses. But the brain wears, the spirits dissipate, the senses are blunted, and the minutest alteration of body clogs the most penetrating and active genius. But God, as we have represented him, thinks, understands, meditates, without brain, without spirits, without any need of senses; not participating their nature, he never participates their alteration, and thus hath intelligence immediately from the treasure of intelligence itself.

The spirit of man owes its existence to a superior spirit, to a foreign cause, to a Being who gives him only such ideas as he thinks proper, and who hath been pleased to conceal numberless mysteries from him. But God, God not only does not owe his existence to a foreign cause, but all that exist derive their existence from him. His ideas were the models of all beings, and he hath only to contemplate himself perfectly to know them.

The spirit of man is naturally a finite spirit; he can consider only one circle of objects at once, many ideas confound him; if he would see too much he sees nothing, he must successively contemplate what he cannot contemplate in one moment. But God is an infinite spirit; with one single look he beholdeth the whole universe. This is the first idea of the omnipresence of God. As I am accounted present in this auditory, because I see the objects that are here, because I am witness of all that passes here; so God is every where, because he sees all, because veils the most impenetrable, darkness the most thick, distances the most immense,

S E R M. immense, can conceal nothing from his knowledge.

III. Soar to the utmost heights, fly into the remotest climates, wrap thyself in the blackest darkness, every where, every where, thou wilt be under his eye. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

But, 2. The knowledge of God is not a bare knowledge, his presence is not an idle presence; it is an active knowledge, it is a presence accompanied with action and motion. We said, just now, that God was every where, because he *influenced* all, as far as influence could agree with his perfections. Remark this restriction, for, as we are discussing a subject the most fertile in controversy, and, as in a discourse of an hour, it is impossible to answer all objections, which may be all answered elsewhere, we would give a general preservative against every mistake. We mean an influence which agrees with the divine perfections; and if, from any of our general propositions, ye infer any consequences injurious to those perfections, ye may conclude, for that very reason, that ye have stretched them beyond their due bounds. We repeat it then, God *influenceth* all things, as far as such influence agrees with his perfections.

When new beings appear, he is there. He influences their production. He gives to all *life, motion, and being*. Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.—O Lord I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret; and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.—Thine hands

Acts xvii.

28.

Neh. ix. 6.

Pf. cxxxix

14, 15, 16.

hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about. S E R M.
 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced III.
 me with bones and sinews. When beings are preserved,
 he is there. He influences their preservation. Thy Pf. xxxvi.
 mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness 5. 6.
 reacheth unto the clouds. Thou preservest man and beast.
 When thou openest thy hand they are filled with good: thou Pf. civ. 22.
 hidest thy face they are troubled, thou takest away their 29, 30.
 breath they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest
 forth thy spirit they are created, and thou renewest the face
 of the earth.

When the world is disordered, he is there. He
 influenceth wars, pestilences, famines, and all the vicis-
 situdes which disorder the world. If nature refuse
 her productions, it is because he hath made the heaven Lev. xxvi.
 as iron, and the earth as brass. If peace succeed war, 19.
 he makes both. If lions slay the inhabitants of Samaria,
 it is the Lord who sends them. When tempestuous
 winds break down those immense banks which your
 industry has opposed to them, when a devouring fire
 reduceth your houses to ashes, it is he who makes the Pf. civ. 4.
 winds his messengers, and his ministers flames of fire.

When every thing succeeds according to our wishes,
 he is there. He influenceth prosperity. Except the Pf. cxxvii.
 Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. 1, 2.
 Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but
 in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late,
 to eat the bread of sorrows. It is God who giveth his
 beloved sleep.

When our understanding is informed, he is there.
 He influenceth our knowledge. For in his light we see Pf. xxxvii.
 light. He lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10.

When our heart disposeth us to our duties, he is
 there. He influenceth our virtues. It is he who
 worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good plea- Phil. ii. 13.
 sure. It is he who giveth us not only to believe but to i. 29.
 suffer for his sake. It is he who giveth to all that ask him James i. 5.
 liberally and upbraideth not.

When

S E R M. When the grossest errors cover us, he is there. He

III. influenceth errors. It is God who sends strong delusions
 2 Thes. ii. that men should believe a lie. Go make the heart of this
 11. people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes,
 11a. vi. 10. lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears.

When we violate the laws of righteousness, he is there. He influenceth sins, even the greatest sins.
 Exod. iv. Witness Pharaoh, whose heart he hardened. Witness
 21. Shimei, whom the Lord bade to curse David. Witness
 2 Sam. xvi. what Isaiah said, the Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit
 11. in the midst of Egypt.
 Is. xix. 14.

When magistrates, our earthly gods, consult and deliberate, he is there. He influenceth policy. It is
 Prov. xxi. he who hath the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth
 1. them as the rivers of water. It is he who giveth kings in
 Hos. xiii. his anger, and taketh them away in his wrath. It is he
 11. who maketh the Assyrian the rod of his anger. Herod
 11a. x. 5. and Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel did what
 Acts iv. 27, 28. his hand and his counsel determined before to be done.

When we live, when we die, he is there. He in-
 Job xiv. 5. fluenceth life and death. Man's days are determined,
 Ps. lxxviii. the number of his months are with him, he has appointed
 20. his bounds that he cannot pass. To God the Lord belong
 1 Sam. ii. the issues from death. He bringeth down to the grave,
 6. and bringeth up.

He influences the least events as well as the most considerable. Not being fatigued with the care of great things, he can occupy himself about the smallest without prejudice to the rest; number the hairs of our
 Matth. x. 29, 30. heads, and not let even a sparrow fall without his will.

But, 3. When God communicates himself to all, when he thus acts on all, when he diffuseth himself thus through the whole, he relates all to his own designs, and makes all serve his own counsels: and this is our third idea of his immensity and omnipresence. God is present with all, because he directs all.

Doth he call creatures into existence? it is to manifest his perfections. It is to have subjects on whom he

he may shower his favours; it is, as it were, to go out S E R M.
of himself, and to form through the whole universe a III.
concert resounding the Creator's existence and glory.

*For the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and
godhead are understood by the things that are made. The
heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth
his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto
night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language
where their voice is not heard.* Rom. i. 20.
Psa. xix.
1, 2, 3.

Doth he preserve creatures? it is to answer his own
designs, the depth of which no finite mind can fathom;
but designs which we shall one day know, and ad-
mire his wisdom when we know them, as we adore it
now, though we know them not.

Doth he send plagues, wars, famines? it is to make
those feel his justice who have abused his goodness, it
is to avenge the violation of his law, the contempt of
his gospel, the forgetting and the forsaking of the in-
terest of his church.

Doth he afford us prosperity? it is to *draw us with
the bands of love*; it is to reveal himself to us by that
love which is his essence; it is to engage us to imitate
him, who *never leaves himself without witness in doing
good.* Hos. xi. 4.
Acts xiv.
17.

Doth he impart knowledge to us? it is to discover
the snares that surround us, the miseries that threaten
us, the origin from which we sprang, the course of life that
we should follow, and the end at which we should aim.

Doth he communicate virtues? it is to animate us
in our race; it is to convince us that there is a mighty
arm to raise us from the abyss into which our natural
corruption hath plunged us; it is that we may *work
out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing
that God worketh in us to will and to do of his own good
pleasure.* Phil. ii.
12, 13.

Doth he send us error? it is to make us respect that
truth which we have resisted.

Doth he abandon us to our vices? it is to punish

S E R M. us for some other vices which we have committed voluntarily and freely; so that, if we could comprehend it, his love for holiness never appears more clearly, than when he abandons men to vice in this manner.

Doth he raise up kings? it is always to oblige them to administer justice, to protect the widow and the orphan, to maintain order and religion. Yet, he often permits them to violate equity, to oppress their people, and to become the scourges of his anger. By them he frequently teacheth us how little account he makes of human grandeurs; seeing he bestows them sometimes upon unworthy men, upon men allured by voluptuousness, governed by ambition, and dazzled with their own glory; upon men who ridicule piety, sell their consciences, negotiate faith and religion, sacrificing the souls of their children to the infamous passions that govern themselves.

Doth he prolong our life? it is because he *is long suffering to us*, it is because he opens in our favour *the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, to lead us to repentance.*

Doth he call us to die? it is to open those eternal books in which our actions are registered; it is to gather our souls into his bosom, *to bind them up in the bundle of life*, to mix them with the ransomed armies of all nations, *tongues and people.*

Such are our ideas of the omnipresence of God. Thus God seeth all, influenceth all, directeth all. In this sense we are to understand this magnificent language of scripture. *Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee. Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord? am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any bide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?* This is what the heathens had a glimpse of, when they said, that God was a circle, the centre of which was every where,

where, and its circumference no where. That all things were full of Jupiter. That he filled all his works. That, fly whither we would, we were always before his eyes. This is what the followers of Mohammed meant, when they said, that where there were two persons, God made the third: where there were three, God made the fourth. Above all, this was our prophet's meaning throughout the Psalm, a part of which we have explained. "O Lord, thou
"hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest
"my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou under-
"standest my thought afar off. Thou compasskest my
"path and my lying down, and art acquainted with
"all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue,
"but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou
"hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand
"upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for
"me, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go
"from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy
"presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art
"there. If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art
"there. If I take the wings of the morning, and
"dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there
"there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand
"shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall
"cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
"Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the
"night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light
"are both alike to thee."

S E R M.
III.
Ver. 1st &
following.

But perhaps, during the course of this meditation, ye may have murmured at our presenting an object, of which all the preaching in the world can give you but imperfect ideas. Suspend your judgments, we are going to shew you whither this discourse, all glimmering as it is, ought to conduct you. Ye are going to see what salutary consequences follow our efforts, even the weak efforts that we have been making to explain the grandeur and omnipresence of God. Let

SERMON. us pass to the conclusion, the chief design of this
III. discourse.

I. Our first reflection is on the difficulties that we meet with in fixing our minds on such subjects as we have been hearing. Ye have doubtless experienced, if ye have endeavoured to follow us, that ye are weary, and wander when ye would go beyond matter. Our minds find almost nothing real, where they meet with nothing sensible. As if the whole essence of beings were corporeal, the mind loseth its way when it ceaseth to be directed by bodies, and it needs the help of imagination to represent even those things which are not susceptible of images; and yet whatever is most grand and noble in the nature of beings is spirit. The sublimest objects, angels who are continually before God, *seraphims who cover their faces* in his presence, cherubims who are the ministers of his will, *thousand thousands which minister unto him, ten thousand times ten thousand which stand before him*; what is most glorious in man, what elevates him above other animals, a soul made in the image of God himself; the Being of beings, the Sovereign Beauty; all these beings are spiritual, abstract, free from sense and matter. Moreover, what pleases and enchants us in bodies, even that comes from a subject abstract, spiritual and incorporeal. Without your soul, aliments have no taste, flowers no smell, the earth no enamel, fire no heat, the stars no brilliancy, the sun no light. Matter of itself is void, and gross, destitute of all the qualities with which our imagination clothes it, and which are proper to our souls. What ought we to conclude from this reflection? My brethren, have ye any idea of your dignity, and primitive grandeur? Have ye yet some few faint resemblances of beings formed in the Creator's image? ye ought, feeble as ye are, confined as ye are in a manner to matter, ye should deplore your misery, ye should groan under that necessity, which, in some sort, confounds your soul with a little dust, ye should sigh
after

after that happy state in which your rapid, free and unclogged souls shall meditate like themselves. This is the first duty that we would prescribe to you. S E R M.
III.

2. Our next reflection is on the majesty of our religion. That must certainly be thought the true religion which gives us the grandest ideas of God. Let our religion be judged by this rule. Where do we see the attributes of the Supreme Being placed in so clear a light? what can be more noble than this idea of God? what can be conceived more sublime than a Being whom nothing escapes, before whom *all things are naked and open* Heb. iv. 13. who, by one single look, fully comprehends all beings past, present, and to come, all that do exist, all that possibly can exist? who thinks, in the same instant, with equal facility on bodies and spirits, on all the dimensions of time and of matter? What more noble can be conceived than a Being who imparteth himself to all, diffuseth himself through all, influenceth all, giveth life and motion to all? What can be conceived more noble than a Being who directeth the conduct of the whole universe, who knoweth how to make all concur to his designs, who knoweth how to relate alike to the laws of order and equity, the virtues of the righteous, the vices of the wicked, the praises of the happy, the blasphemies of the victims sacrificed to his vengeance in hell? When we find in any heathen philosopher, amidst a thousand false notions, amidst a thousand wild imaginations, some few leaves of the flowers with which our bibles are strewed, we are ready to cry a miracle, a miracle, we transmit these shreds of the deity (if I may be allowed to speak so) to the most distant posterity, and these ideas, all maimed, and all defiled as they are, procure their authors an immortal reputation. On this principle, what respect, what veneration, what deference ought we to have for the Patriarchs and the Prophets, for the Evangelists and the Apostles, who spoke of God in so sublime a manner! But be not surprized at their superiority over the great pagan geniusses:

S E R M. geniusses; if the biblical writers, like them, had been
 III. guided only by human reason, like them they would
 have wandered too. If they spoke so nobly of God, it
 1 Cor. ii. was because they had received that *spirit who searcheth*
 10. *all things, yea the deep things of God.* It was because
 2 Tim. iii. *all scripture was given by inspiration.* It was because
 16. *the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but*
 2 Pet. i. 21. *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy*
Ghost.

3. Make a third reflection. This grandeur of God removes the greatest stumbling-blocks that sceptics and infidels pretend to meet with in religion. It justifies all those dark mysteries which are above the comprehension of our feeble reason. We would not make use of this reflection to open a way for human fancies, and to authorize every thing that is presented to us under the idea of the marvellous. All doctrines that are incomprehensible are not divine, nor ought we to embrace any opinion merely because it is beyond our knowledge. But when a religion, in other respects, hath good guarantees, when we have good arguments to prove that such a revelation comes from heaven, when we certainly know that it is God who speaks, ought we to be surprized if ideas of God, which come so fully authenticated, absorb and confound us? I freely grant, that, had I consulted my own reason only, I could not have discovered some mysteries of the gospel. Nevertheless, when I think on the grandeur of God, when I cast my eyes on that vast ocean, when I consider that immense all, nothing astonishes me, nothing stumbles me; nothing seems to me inadmissible, how incomprehensible soever it may be. When the subject is divine, I am ready to believe all, to admit all, to receive all; provided I be convinced that it is God his self who speaks to me, or any one on his part. After this I am no more astonished that there are three distinct persons in one divine essence; one God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost. After this, I
 am

am no more astonished that God foresees all without S E R M. forcing any; permits sin without forcing the sinner; III. ordains free and intelligent creatures to such and such ends, yet without destroying their intelligence, or their liberty. After this, I am no more astonished, that the justice of God required a satisfaction proportional to his greatness, that his own love hath provided that satisfaction, and that God, from the abundance of his compassion, designed the mystery of an incarnate God; a mystery which angels admire while sceptics oppose; a mystery which absorbs human reason, but which fills all heaven with songs of praise; a mystery which is the great mystery by excellence, but the greatness of which nothing should make us reject, since religion proposeth it as the grand effort of the wisdom of the incomprehensible God, and commandeth us to receive it on the testimony of the incomprehensible God himself. Either religion must tell us nothing about God, or what it tells us must be beyond our capacities, and, in discovering even the borders of this immense ocean, it must needs exhibit a vast extent in which our feeble eyes are lost. But what surprizes me, what stumbles me, what frightens me, is to see a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the Supreme Being, oppose that Intelligence who sitteth at the helm of the world; question what he affirms, dispute what he determines, appeal from his decisions, and, even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are beyond his capacity. Enter into thy nothingness, mortal creature. What madness animates thee? How durst thou pretend, thou who art but a point, thou whose essence is but an atom, to measure thyself with the Supreme Being, with him who fills heaven and earth, with him whom *heaven, the heaven of heavens cannot contain?* 1 Kings viii. 27. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? high as heaven what canst thou do? deeper than hell what canst thou know? He stretcheth

1 Tim. iii.

16.

1 Kings

viii. 27.

Job xi. 7.

S E R M. *stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth
 III. the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his
 Job xxvi. thick clouds, the pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished
 7. at his reproof. Lo these are parts of his ways, but how
 11. little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his
 14. power who can understand? Gird up now thy loins like a
 xxxviii. 1. man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.
 2, 3, &c. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
 declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the
 measures thereof? who hath stretched the line upon it?
 whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? who laid
 the corner-stone thereof, when the morning-stars sang toge-
 ther, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Who shut
 up the sea with doors, when I made the cloud the garment
 thereof, and thick darkness a swadling band for it? when
 I brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,
 and said, Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther: and here
 shall thy proud waves be stayed? He that reproveth God
 let him answer this. O Lord, such knowledge is too won-
 derful for me: it is too high, I cannot attain unto it!*

xl. 2.

4. But, my brethren, shall these be the only inferences from our text? shall we reap only speculations from this discourse? shall we only believe, admire, and exclaim? Ah! from this idea of God I see all the virtues issue which religion prescribes! If such be the grandeur of the God whom I adore, miserable wretch! what ought my repentance to be! I, a contemptible worm, I, a creature whom God could tread beneath his feet, and crush into dust by a single act of his will, I have rebelled against the great God, I have endeavoured to provoke him to jealousy, as if I had been stronger than he. I have insulted that Majesty which the angels of God adore; I have attacked God, with madness and boldness, on his throne, and in his empire. Is it possible to feel remorsees too cutting for sins which the grandeur of the offended, and the littleness of the offender, make so very atrocious?

1 Cor. x.
22.

5. If

5. If such be the grandeur of God, what should S E R M.
our humility be! Grandees of the world, mortal di- III.
vinities, who swell with vanity in the presence of God,
oppose yourselves to the immense God. Behold his
eternal ideas, his infinite knowledge, his general in-
fluence, his universal direction; enter his immense
ocean of perfections and virtues, what are ye? a grain
of dust, a point, an atom, a nothing.

6. If such be the grandeur of God, what ought our
confidence to be! *If God be for us, who can be against* Rom. viii.
us? Poor creature, tossed about the world, as by so 31.
many winds, by hunger, by sickness, by persecution,
by misery, by nakedness, by exile; fear not in a vessel
of which God his self is the pilot.

7. But above all, if such be the grandeur of God,
if God be every where present, what should our vi-
gilance be! and, to return to the idea with which we
began, what impression should this thought make on
reasonable souls! *God seeth me. When thou wast under* John i. 48.
the fig-tree, said Jesus Christ to Nathaniel, *I saw thee.* See Eccle.
We do not know what Jesus Christ saw under the iii. 23, 24,
fig-tree, nor is it necessary now to enquire: but it was 25.
certainly something which, Nathaniel was fully per-
suaded, no mortal eye had seen. As soon, there-
fore, as Jesus Christ had uttered these words, he be-
lieved, and said, *Rabbi, thou art the Christ, the son of*
the living God. My brethren, God useth the same
language to each of you to-day: *when thou wast under*
the fig-tree I saw thee.

Thou hypocrite, when, wrapped in a veil of re-
ligion, embellished with exterior piety, thou con-
cealedst an impious heart, and didst endeavour to im-
pose on God and man, *I saw thee.* I penetrated all
those labyrinths, I dissipated all those darkneses, I
dived into all thy deep designs.

Thou worldling, who, with a prudence truly infer-
nal, hast the art of giving a beautiful tint to the most
odious objects; who appearest not to hate thy neigh-
bour,

S E R M. bour, because thou dost not openly attack him; not
 III. to falsify thy promise, because thou hast the art of
 eluding it; not to oppress thy dependents, because thou
 knowest how to impose silence on them: *I saw*
thee, when thou gavest those secret stabs, when thou
 didst receive bribes, and didst accumulate those
 wages of unrighteousness, which cry for vengeance
 against thee.

Thou slave to sensuality, ashamed of thine excesses
 before the face of the sun, *I saw thee*, when, with bars
 and bolts, with obscurity and darkness, and com-
 plicated precautions, thou didst hide thyself from the
 1 Cor. vi. eyes of men, *defile the temple of God, and make the mem-*
 15. *bers of Christ the members of a harlot.*

My brethren, the discourses, which we usually
 preach to you, absorb your minds in a multitude of
 ideas. A collection of moral ideas perhaps confound
 instead of instructing you, and when we attempt to
 engage you in too many reflections, ye enter really into
 none. Behold an epitome of religion. Behold a mo-
 rality in three words. Return to your houses, and
 every where carry this reflection with you, *God seeth me,*
God seeth me. To all the wiles of the devil, to all the
 snares of the world, to all the baits of cupidity, oppose
 this reflection, *God seeth me.* If, cloathed with a human
 form, he were always in your path, were he to follow you
 to every place, were he always before you with his
 majestic face, with eyes flashing with lightning, with
 looks inspiring terror, dare ye before his august presence
 give a loose to your passions? But ye have been hear-
 ing that his majestic face is every where, those spark-
 ling eyes do inspect you in every place, those terrible
 looks do consider you every where. Particularly, in
 the ensuing week, while ye are preparing for the
 Lord's supper, recollect this. Let each examine his
 own heart, and endeavour to search into his conscience,
 where he may discover so much weakness, so much
 corruption, so much hardness, so many unclean sources
 overflowing

overflowing with so many excesses, and let this idea SERM.
strike each of you, *God seeth me.* God seeth me, as I see III.
myself, unclean, ungrateful, and rebellious. O may
this idea produce contrition and sorrow, a just remorse
and a sound conversion, a holy and a fervent com-
munion, crowned with graces and virtues. Happy,
if, after our examination, we have a new heart! a heart
agreeable to those eyes that search and try it! Happy,
if, after our communion, after a new examination, we
can say with the prophet, *O Lord, thou hast proved mine* Psa. xvii.
heart, thou hast tried me, and hast found nothing. So³
be it. To God be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

1/20/78

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the various departments of the Government of the State of New York, for the year 1890.

2 12 2 54 14

S E R M O N IV.

The GRANDEUR of G O D.

VOL. I.

IV. MON. S. E. R.

The Grandeur of G. O. D.

S E R M O N IV.

The GRANDEUR of G O D.

ISAIAH xl. 12, to 28.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the

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the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: that bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted, yea, they shall not be sown, yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth. Why say'st thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel; My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the Lord is the everlasting God?

THE words, the lofty words of the text, require two sorts of observations: The first are necessary to explain and confirm the prophet's notions of God; the second to determine and to inforce his design in describing the deity with so much pomp.

The prophet's notions of God are diffused through all the verses of the text. *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure? Who hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold the nations are as the drop of a bucket. Behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.*

The prophet's design in describing the deity with so much magnificence is to discountenance idolatry, of which there are two sorts. The first, I call, religious idolatry, which consists in rendering that religious worship to a creature, which is due to none but God. The second, I call, moral idolatry, which consists in distrusting the promises of God in dangerous crises,
and

and in expecting that assistance from men which cannot be expected from God. In order to discountenance idolatry in religion, the prophet contents himself with describing it. *The workman maketh a graven image, the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold.* SERM. IV.

For the purpose of discrediting idolatry in morals, he opposeth the grandeur of God to the most grand objects among men, I mean earthly kings. God, saith the prophet, *bringeth the princes to nothing, he shall blow upon them, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. Why say'st thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel; My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?* and so on.

This subject may seem perhaps too copious for one discourse, however, it will not exceed the limits of this; and we will venture to detain you a moment, before we attend to the matter, in remarking the manner, that is, the style of our prophet, and the expressive sublimity of our text. It is a composition, which not only surpasses the finest passages of the most celebrated profane authors, but perhaps exceeds the loftiest parts of the holy scriptures.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? Who hath meted out heaven with a span? Who hath comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure? Who hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? All nations before him are as the drop of a bucket. He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. What loftiness of expression! The deference that we pay to the sacred writers is not founded on the beauty of their diction. They do not affect to come to us *with the enticing words of man's wisdom.* We cannot help observing, however, in some of their writings, the most perfect models of eloquence. God seems to have dispensed talents of this kind, in the same manner as he hath sometimes bestowed temporal blessings of another kind. Riches
VOL. I. N and

S E R M. and grandeurs are too mean, and too unsatisfying, to constitute the felicity of a creature formed in the image of God. Immortal men, who are called to participate felicity and glory with their God, are indifferent to the part which they act, during their short existence on the stage of time. To them it is a matter of very little importance, whether they occupy the highest or the lowest, the most conspicuous or the most obscure posts in society. It signifies but little to them, whether they ride in sumptuous equipages, or walk afoot. To them it is a matter of very little consequence, whether superb processions attend their funerals, or their carcases be laid in their graves without pomp or parade. Yet, when it pleaseth God to signalize any by gifts of this kind, he doth it like a God; if ye will allow the expression, he doth it so as to shew that his mighty hands hold all that can contribute to ennoble, and to elevate mankind. Observe his munificence to Solomon. *I have given thee riches and glory, said the Lord to him, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.* In virtue of this promise, God loaded Solomon with temporal blessings: he gave him all. In virtue of this promise, *silver was no more esteemed than stones in Jerusalem,* (the capital of this favourite of heaven) *nor the cedars of Lebanon than the sycamore trees of the plain.*

1 Kings
iii. 12, 13.

2 Chron.
ix. 27.

2 Cor. iv.
7.

God hath observed the same conduct to the heralds of religion, in regard to the talents that form an orator. The truths which they teach are too serious, and too interesting, to need the help of ornaments. The treasures of religion, which God committed to them, are so valuable, that it is needless for us to examine whether they be presented to us in *earthen vessels*. But when the holy spirit deigns to distinguish any one of his servants by gifts of this kind, my God! with what a rich profusion hath he the power of doing it! He fires the orator's imagination with a flame altogether divine;

divine: he elevates his ideas to the least accessible region of the universe, and dictates language above mortal mouths. S E R M.
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What kind of elocution can ye alledge, of which the sacred authors have not given us the most perfect models?

Is it the style proper for history? A historian must assume, it should seem, as many different forms of speaking, as there are different events in the subjects of his narration. And who ever gave such beautiful models of this style as Moses? Witness these words, which have acquired him the elogium of a pagan critic: * *God said, Let there be light, and there was light.* Gen. i. 3.
Witness these, *Isaac said, My father; Abraham answered, Here am I my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.* xxii. 7. 8. Witness these words, *Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him, and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me: and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he lifted up his voice and wept, and said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? Come near to me, I pray you, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.* xlv. 1.

Is it the tender style? Who ever gave such beautiful models as the prophet Jeremiah? Witness the pathetic descriptions, and the affecting complaints in the Lamentations: *The ways of Zion mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: All her gates are desolate: her priests sigh: her virgins are afflicted: and she is in bitterness. Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. For these things I weep, mine eye, mine eye runneth down.* i. 4.
12.
16.

Is it a style proper to terrify and confound? Who ever gave more beautiful models of this style than Ezekiel? Witness, among many others, these ex-

N 2

pressions:

* Longinus, Sect. ix.

S E R M. preſſions: *How weak is thine heart, ſaith the Lord God, ſeeing thou doſt all theſe things: the work of an imperious whorish woman? A wife that committeth adultery, which taketh ſtrangers inſtead of her huſband! They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all lovers, and hireſt them, that they may come unto thee on every ſide for thy whoredom.*

IV. *ſeeing thou doſt all theſe things: the work of an imperious whorish woman? A wife that committeth adultery, which taketh ſtrangers inſtead of her huſband! They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all lovers, and hireſt them, that they may come unto thee on every ſide for thy whoredom.*

Above all, is it the lofty, noble, and ſublime ſtyle? Whoſe models are comparable to the prophet Iſaiah's? Chriſtian preacher, thou who ſtudiest to convince, to perſuade, to carry away the hearts of the people to whom God hath ſent thee, neither make Cicero nor Demosthenes thy models: investigate the ideas, and appropriate the language of the inſpired writers.—Heat thine imagination at the fire which inflamed them, and, with them, endeavour to elevate thy mind to the manſions of God, to *the light which no man can approach unto.* Learn of theſe great maſters to handle *the ſword of the ſpirit*, and to manage *the word of God quick and powerful, even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow.*

1 Tim. vi.
16.

Heb. iv.
12.

But, when I propoſe my text as a pattern of elocution, far from your minds be the idea of a trifling orator's fraudulent art, whoſe ambition it is to exceed his ſubject, and to lend his hero the virtues that he wants. The portrait drawn by the prophet is infinitely inferior to his original. Ye will be fully convinced of this, if ye attend to the four following conſiderations of the grandeurs of God.

1. The ſublimity of his eſſence. 2. The immenſity of his works. 3. The efficiency of his will. 4. The magnificence of ſome of his mighty acts, at certain periods, in favour of his church.

Fiſt. *The ſublimity of his eſſence.* The prophet's mind was filled with this object. It is owing to this that he repeats the grand title of *Jehovah, THE LORD*, which ſignifies *I am* by excellence, and which diſtinguiſheth,

guisheth, by four grand characters, the essence of God, SERM.
from the essence of creatures. IV.

1. The Essence of God is *independent in its cause*. God is a self-existent being. We exist, but ours is only a borrowed existence, for existence is foreign from us. There was time when we were not, and our origin is nothing: and as we should cease to be if God were only to give the word, so his word was necessary to give us existence at first. But God exists of himself: Existence is his own: and he owes it only to himself, and to the eminence of his own perfections. An idea, in which it is difficult not to lose one's self, and which is incomprehensible to us, because it relates to an infinite attribute, and because all that is infinite absorbs a finite mind: but an idea, however, as true as it is incomprehensible. The existence of a mite, or of a grain of dust, or even of the most diminutive being in nature, is sufficient necessarily to conduct us to the independent, self-existent God.

Even the atheist is obliged by his own principles to agree with us in this article: I mean the atheist of some knowledge: the modern atheist. Let us thankfully own, my brethren, that the improvements, which a sound philosophy hath produced in the sciences, have been communicated even to atheism. Formerly, atheists could digest such propositions as these: the world hath not always subsisted; it was made of nothing. Now, these propositions are too gross for any to hazard his reputation on the advancing of them. Indeed, to affirm, that nothing hath made the world, is not only to advance an absurdity, it is to advance a contradiction. To say that nothing hath created the world, is to say that nothing hath not created the world, and to say that nothing hath not created a world which actually exists, is to deny the existence of the world. No rules of reasoning require us to answer people, who contradict themselves in so glaring a manner: and, on this article, we rank them with idiots.

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IV.

idiots. Modern atheists admit, as we do, a self-existent being. All the difference between them and us is this; they attribute this eminent perfection to matter: but we attribute it to God. The atheist derives his existence from a collection of atoms, which a blind chance had assembled: we ascribe our existence to a Being possessed of all possible perfections. The atheist discovers his God and Creator in a confused conjunction of bodies destitute of reason: we find our God and Creator in the supreme Being, the fountain of all existence. But both we and the atheist are obliged to own an increated, self-existent Being. And as it is easy for a reasonable person to decide the question, whether this perfection agree to God or to matter, it is easy for him also to comprehend that God is a self-existent Being.

2. The Essence of God is *universal in its extent*. God possesseth the reality of every thing that exists. A celebrated infidel, educated in your provinces, † (would to God none were educated here still!) This infidel, I say, invented a new way of publishing atheism, by disguising it. I am mistaking in saying *new*: for it would be easy to prove, that the miserable Spinoza had not the glory of inventing it; he only revived a pagan notion ‡. He says, that there is a God, but that this God is only the universality and assemblage of creatures: that every being is a modification of God; that the sun is God, as giving light, that aliments are God, as affording nourishment; and so of the rest. What a system! What an abominable system! But this system, all abominable as it is, hath, however, some truth, or some foundation. God is not diffused through all these different beings: God is not divided: but

† Benedict de Spinoza was born at Amsterdam, and was educated in the same city under Francis Vander Ende. Him Monf. Saurin means.

‡ See Dr. Clarke on the Attributes. Vol. I. prop. 3.

but he possesseth all the perfections of the universe, S E R M. IV.
and it is by this notion of God, that the true religion is distinguished from superstition. The superstitious, struck with the beauty of some particular being, made that being the object of their adoration. One, struck with the beauty of the stars, said, that the stars were Gods. Another, astonished at the splendor of the sun, said that the sun was God. Democritus, surprized at the beauty of fire, said, that God was material fire. Chrysippus, amazed at the beauty of that necessity, which causeth every thing to answer its destination, said, that God was fate. Parmenides, affected with the beautiful extent of heaven and earth, said, that God was that extent.

But God is all this, because he eminently possesseth all this. An ancient heathen said of Camillus, that he was the whole Roman republic to him: and Toxaris, when he had procured Anacharsis the acquaintance of Solon, said to him: *This is Athens, this is Greece; thou art no longer a stranger, thou hast seen the whole.* Let us sanctify this thought by applying it to God. God is all the Roman republic, all Greece, the whole world and all its inhabitants. Yes, he is the beauty of the stars, the brightness of the sun, the purity of fire, the subtilty of ethereal matter, the expanse of heaven and the law of fate; he is the sagacity of the politician, the penetration of the philosopher, the bravery of the soldier, the undaunted courage, and the cautious coolness of the general. If, among these qualities, there be any incompatible with the purity of his essence, and therefore inapplicable to him, yet in this sense they belong to him, all are subject to his empire, and act only by his will. He is, as an ancient writer expresseth it, a boundless ocean of existence. From this ocean of existence all created beings, like so many rivulets, flow. From this ocean of light proceeded the sun with its brightness, the stars with their glitter, along with all the brilliancies of other beings that approach their nature. From this ocean of wisdom

came

S E R M, came those profound politicians, who penetrate the
 IV, deepest recesses of the human heart; hence those sub-
 lime philosophers, who explore the heavens by the
 marvels of dioptrics, and descend into the bowels of
 the earth by their knowledge of nature; and hence all
 those superior geniusses, who cultivate the sciences, and
 the liberal arts, and who constitute the beauty of the
 intelligent world. *In him we live, and move, and have*
our being. We breathe his air, and we are animated
 by his spirit; it is his power that upholds, his know-
 ledge that informs, and his wisdom that conducts us.

Acts xvii.
 28.

3. The Essence of God is *unchangeable in its exercise.*
 Creatures only pass from nothing to existence, and
 from existence to nothing. Their existence is rather a
 continual variation than a permanent state; and they
 are all carried away with the same vicissitudes. Hardly
 are we children before we become men: hardly are we
 arrived at manhood before we become old; and as soon
 as we become old we die. We love to-day what we
 hated yesterday, and to-morrow we shall hate what
 to-day we love. David hath given us a just definition
 of man. He defines him a phantom, who only *appears*,
 and who appears only in a *vain show*. But *I the Lord*
change not: the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He
 is, as it were, the fixed point, on which revolve all
 the creatures in the universe, without the partaking
 his self of their revolutions.

Pf. xxxix.
 6.
 Mal. iii. 6.
 Heb. xiii.
 8.

4. Finally, the divine Essence is *eternal in its du-
 ration: Hast thou not known*, saith our prophet, *that*
he is the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends
of the earth? When we attempt to measure the duration
 of God, by tracing it beyond the first periods of this
 universe, we lose ourselves in the unfathomable depths
 of eternity: we heap ages upon ages, millions of years
 upon millions of years; but no beginning of his ex-
 istence can we find. And when we endeavour to
 stretch our thoughts, and to penetrate the most remote
 futurity, again we heap ages upon ages, millions of
 years upon millions of years, and lose ourselves again
 in

in the same abyſs, perceiving, that he can have no end, S E R M.
as he had no beginning. He is *the ancient of days*, IV.
the alpha and omega, the firſt and the laſt. He is, Dan. vii.
he was, he is to come. Before the mountains were brought
forth, before the earth and the world were formed, even Rev. i. 8.
from everlaſting to everlaſting he is God. And, when Pſ. xc. 2.
the mountains ſhall be diſſolved, when the founda-
tions of the earth ſhall be deſtroyed, when all ſenſible
objects ſhall be folded up like a veſture, he will be Heb. i. 12.
the everlaſting God, will be, when they exiſt no more, as
he was before they exiſted at all.

Secondly. Having judged of the grandeur of God
by the ſublimity of his eſſence, judge of it by *the*
immensity of his works. The prophet invites us to
this meditation in the words of my text. *It is he that*
ſtretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and ſpreadeth them
out as a tent to dwell in. *Liſt up your eyes on high, and*
behold who hath created theſe things. *It is he who bringeth*
out their hoſt by number, he calleth them all by names. *By*
the greatneſs of his might, for that he is ſtrong in power,
not one faileth. But who can pretend to diſcuſs, in a
ſingle article of one ſermon, a ſubject, which whole
volumes could not contain? For if there be a ſubject,
in which ſimple narration reſembles rhetorical bombaſt,
it is undoubtedly this.

A novice is frightened at hearing what aſtronomers
aſſert; that the ſun is a million times bigger than
the earth: that the naked eye diſcovers more than
a thouſand fixed ſtars, which are ſo many ſuns to en-
lighten unknown ſystems: that with the help of glaſſes
we may diſcover an almoſt infinite number: that two
thouſand have been reckoned in one conſtellation;
and that, without exaggerating, they may be num-
bered at more than two millions: that what are called
nebulous ſtars, of which there is an innumerable mul-
titude, that appear to us as if they were involved in
little miſty clouds, are all aſſemblages of ſtars.

S E R M. A novice is frightened, when he is told, that there
 IV. is such a prodigious distance between the earth and the sun, that a body, moving with the greatest rapidity that art could produce, would take up twenty-five years in passing from the one to the other: that it would take up seven hundred and fifty thousand to pass from the earth to the nearest of the fixed stars: and to the most distant more than a hundred millions of years.

A novice is frightened: (do not accuse me, my brethren, of wandering from the subject of this discourse, for the saints, who are proposed in scripture as patterns to us, cherished their devotions with meditations of this kind: at the sight of these grand objects they exclaimed, *O Lord, when we consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?* And my text engageth me to fix your attention upon these objects: *lift up your eyes on high and behold.*) A novice is frightened, when he is assured, that, although the stars, which form a constellation, seem to touch one another, yet the distances of those that are nearest together cannot be ascertained, and that even words are wanting to express the spaces which separate those that are at the greatest distances from each other: that if two men were observing two fixed stars, from two parts of the earth, the most distant from each other, the lines that went from their eyes, and terminated on that star, would be confounded together; that it would be the same with two men, were one of them upon earth, and the other in the sun, though the sun and the earth are at such a prodigious distance from each other; so inconsiderable is that distance in comparison of the space which separates both from the star. All this startles a novice: and yet, what are these bodies, countless in their number, and enormous in their size? What are these unmeasurable spaces, which

which absorb our senses and imaginations? What are S E R M.
all these in comparison of what reason discovers? Shall I V.
we be puerile enough to persuade ourselves that there
is nothing beyond what we see? Have we not reason
to think, that there are spaces far, far beyond, full of
the Creator's wonders, and affording matter of con-
templation to *the thousand thousands*, to the *ten thousand* Dan. vii.
times ten thousand intelligences that he hath made? 10.

Here let us pause. Over all this universe God
reigns. But what is man even in comparison of this
earth? "Let him reflect on himself," (I borrow the
words of a modern author) "let him consider what
" he is in comparison of the whole that exists beside:
" let him regard himself as confined in this obscure
" by-corner of nature: and from the appearance of
" the little dungeon where he is lodged, that is, of
" this visible world, let him learn to estimate the
" world, its kingdoms, and himself at their real value."
Isaiah estimates their real value in the words of my
text. Behold, says he, *all nations before him are as a drop*
of a bucket: they are of no more value than *the small*
dust that cleaves to the balance: *God sitteth upon the*
circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grass-
boppers: yea, they are still less considerable, *all nations*
before him are as nothing.

Thirdly. The immensity of the Creator's works
leads us to *the efficiency of his will*: and the idea of the
real world conducts us to that of the possible world.
There needs no train of propositions to discover a con-
nection between what God hath done, and what he
can do. The idea of a creature leads to that of a
Creator: for, in supposing that some beings have been
created, we suppose an author of their creation. The
idea of a creative Being includes the idea of a Being
whose will is efficient: for as soon as ye suppose a creative
Being, ye suppose a Being whose will is self-efficient.
But a Being, whose will is self-efficient, is a Being who,
by a single act of his will, can create all possible beings:

S E R M. that is, all, the existence of which implies no contradiction; there being no reason for limiting the power of a will that hath been once efficient of itself. So that as soon as ye conceive a Being who hath once created, ye conceive a Being who can always create.

Let us then form this notion of God: a Being who, by a single act of his will, can create now in empty space, as he hath formerly created. He can say, of light which doth not exist, what he once said of that which doth exist, *Let there be light*; and there shall be light, like that which actually is. He can say, of luminaries which are not, what he hath said of luminaries which already are, *Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven*; and luminaries, that are not, shall be, as those that once were not are now, and will owe their existence to that will, which is always irresistible, and always efficient; or, as the prophet saith in the words of my text, to *the greatness of his might*, to the *strength of his power*.

Lastly, to convince you of the grandeur of God, I am to remark to you, *the magnificence of some of his mighty acts, at certain periods, in favour of his church*. The prophet had two of these periods in view. The first was the return of the Jews from that captivity in Babylon which he had denounced: and the second, the coming of the Messiah, of which their return from captivity was only a shadow.

What wonders did God work in the first of these periods! Nebuchadnezzar, the tyrant of the Jews, had obtained universal monarchy, or, as the prophet Jeremiah expresseth it, he was become *the hammer of the whole earth*. The inspired writers represent the rapidity of his victories under the emblem of the swiftness of an eagle. We can hardly imagine the speed with which he overran Ethiopia, Arabia, Palestine, Persia, Media, Egypt, Idumea, Syria, and almost all Asia, and with which he conquered all those extensive countries

tries as he marched through them. Cyrus had been S E R M.
appointed by the Lord, and nominated by the prophets, IV.
to stop his career, and to subdue those Babylonians,
who had subdued so many nations. But who was this
Cyrus? Son of a father, whose meanness and obscurity
had prevailed with Astyages, king of Media, to give
him his daughter Mandana in marriage; how will he
perform such prodigious enterprizes? This is not all.
Astyages was afraid that Mandana's son should fulfil a
dream, of which his diviners had given him frightful
interpretations. He caused her therefore to reside at
court during her pregnancy, and commanded Har-
pagus, one of his most devoted courtiers, to put the
child to death as soon as he should be born. But God
preserved the child, and all the power of Astyages
could not make one hair fall from his head without
the divine permission. Harpagus trembled at his
commission, resigned it to the overseer of the king's
flocks, and ordered him to expose Mandana's son:
But, when he was preparing to obey him, his wife,
affected with the beauty of young Cyrus, prevailed
with her husband to expose her own son in his stead.

Thus, by a train of miracles, was this *anointed of*
God preserved, and by a train of greater miracles still,
did he stir up the Persians against the Medes, march
at the head of them against the cruel Astyages, defeat
him, conquer Media, and, at length, besiege Babylon.
Nebuchadnezzar had surrounded that city with a triple
wall, and had replaced the bricks of Semiramis with free-
stone, which contributed, says Dion, less to the magni-
ficence than to the eternity of the empire. The walls
were an hundred feet high, and fifty broad, so that it
was said of that great city, it was alike incredible
how art could form, or art destroy it. But what walls,
what fortifications, can resist the blows of an arm
supported by *the greatness of the might, the strength of the*
power of the omnipotent God! Every thing submits
to the valour of Cyrus: he takes Babylon, and before
he

SERM. he hath well secured his conquest, does homage for the
 IV. victory to the God who had foretold it; and releases the Jews from captivity. These accounts are related by heathen authors, and particularly by Herodotus, and Justin: God having determined that the bitterest enemies of revelation should preserve those monuments which demonstrate the divinity of our prophecies.

But I said just now, that the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon was only a shadow of that deliverance, which the Messiah was to bring into the world: and that the mighty acts, which God wrought in the first period, were only faint images of what he would operate in the second. Accordingly, our prophet had the second of these periods much more in view than the first in the words of my text. It is not a love for the marvellous: it is neither a prejudice of education, nor a blind submission to confessions of faith; (motives that produce so much superstition among christians :) these are not the reasons of our comment: it is the nature of the thing; it is the magnificence of the prophecies connected with my text; it is the authority of S. Paul, who, in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans, and in the second of his first epistle to the Corinthians, interprets these words of my text of the gospel, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord? who hath been his counsellor?* Accordingly, in this second period, God hath displayed treasures of wisdom and knowledge. But we have elsewhere treated this subject at large, and we choose rather only to hint this article to day than to incur the just reproach of treating it imperfectly.

Ver. 34.

Ver. 16.

Such then are the grandeurs of God; and all that I have lisped out is more properly the title of the subject, upon which I would fix your attention, than the subject itself well digested. Nevertheless, how imperfect soever the sketch may be, it may serve to convince us, that there is no extravagance in the prophet's ideas; that, if his language is lofty, it is not hyperbolical, and that

that he is always below the truth, even when he uses SERM.
IV. these sublime expressions, *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? meted the heavens with a span, comprehended the dust of the earth with a measure, weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?* But why doth he describe the deity with so much pomp? This remains to be considered in the second part of this discourse, which shall also be the application.

II. We observed in the beginning, that the prophet's design was to render two sorts of idolatry odious: idolatry in religion; and idolatry in morals.

Idolatry in religion consists in rendering those religious homages to creatures, which are due to the Creator only. To discredit this kind of idolatry, the prophet contents himself with describing it. He shames the idolater by reminding him of the origin of idols, and of the pains taken to preserve them. What is the origin of idols? *The workman melteth an image, saith our prophet, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold.* What pains doth the idolater take to preserve his idols? *He casteth silver chains to fasten them, and to prevent thieves from stealing them, or perhaps for fear they should escape through their own inconstancy.* The heathens had been accustomed, when they besieged a city, to evoke the tutelary gods; (Macrobius has preserved a long form of these evocations*) and the besieged, to prevent the effects of these evocations, and, to secure their gods from going into their enemies camps, used to fasten their images with chains. Many proofs of this might be alledged, but one passage of Quintus Curtius shall suffice. He tells us, that, a citizen of Tyre having publicly declared that he had

* Saturn. III. 9. The following is the form of the incantation. *If you be a God, or a Goddess, under whose guardianship the people and the city of the Carthaginians is, and you, particularly, who have taken upon you the protection of that people and city, I worship you, and humbly beg you would be pleased to forsake the people and city of the Carthaginians, to abandon their places, temples, religious ceremonies and cities, and come away,* &c. Bayle. Soranus. Rem. E.

S E R M. seen in a dream the image of Apollo quitting the city,
 IV. the citizens immediately used the precaution of fastening it with a chain of gold.†

But the prophet no less intended to shame idolatry in morals, which consists in distrusting the promises of God in extreme dangers, and in expecting from men a succour that cannot be expected from God. A man is guilty of moral idolatry, when, in dangerous crises, he says, *My way is hid from the Lord; my judgment is passed over from my God.* Be not surprized at my giving so odious a name to a disposition of mind, which is too common even among those whose piety is the least suspected, and the best established. The essence of idolatry, in general, is to disrobe the deity of his perfections, and to adorn a creature with them. There are indeed many degrees of this disposition. He, who renders divine honours to the glimmering light of a taper, is guilty perhaps of a more gross idolatry, than he who worships the sun. The Egyptian, who worships a rat, is perhaps more absurd than the Roman, who ranks a Cæsar with the gods. But, after all, there is so small a difference between the meanest insect and the greatest emperor, the glimmering of a taper and the glory of the sun, when compared with the Supreme Being, that there can be no great difference between these two sorts of idolatry.

Let us apply this to our subject. God is the sole arbiter of events. Whenever ye think, that any more powerful being directs them to comfort you, ye put the creature in the Creator's place; whether ye do it in a manner more or less absurd: whether they be formidable armies, impregnable fortresses, and well-stored magazines, which ye thus exalt into deities; or whether it be a small circle of friends, an easy income,

or

† L. IV. 3. 21. Metu aurea catena devinxere simulacrum, aræque Herculis, cujus numini urbem dicaverant, inseruere vinculum, quasi illo Deo Apollinem retenturi.

or a country-house; it does not signify, ye are alike SERM.
idolaters. IV.

The Jews were often guilty of the first sort of idolatry. The captivity in Babylon was the last curb to that fatal propensity. But this miserable people, whose existence and preservation, whose prosperities and adversities, were one continued train of obvious miracles, immediately from heaven; this miserable people, whose whole history should have prevailed with them to have feared God only, and to have confided in him intirely; this miserable people trembled at Nebuchadnezzar, and his army, as if both had acted independently on God. Their imaginations prostrated before these second causes, and they shuddered at the sight of the Chaldean Marmosets, as if they had afforded assistance to their worshippers, and had occasioned their triumphs over the church.

Thanks be to God, my dear brethren, that the light of the gospel hath opened the eyes of a great number of Christians, in regard to idolatry in religion. I say a great number, and not all: for how many parts of the christian world still deserve the prophet's reproach? *the workman melteth a graven image, the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold. Have ye not known? have ye not heard?* Blessed be God, we are quite free from this kind of idolatry! But how many idolaters of the second kind do I see?

Ye, who, in order to avert public calamities, satisfy yourselves with a few precautions of worldly prudence, and oppose provisions to scarcity, medicines to mortality, an active vigilance to the danger of a contagion; and take no pains to extirpate those horrible crimes, which provoke the vengeance of heaven to inflict punishments on public bodies; ye are guilty of this second kind of idolatry, ye stand exposed to this malediction, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.* Jer. xvii. Were your confidence placed in God, ye would endeavour to avert national

S E R M. judgments by purging the state of those scandalous
 IV. commerces, those barbarous extortions, and all those other wicked practices, which are the surest fore-runners, and the principal causes of famine, and pestilence, and war.

Desolate family, ye, who rested all your expectations upon one single head; ye, who made one single person the axis of all your schemes and hopes; ye, who lately saw that person cut down in the midst of his race, and carried away with the torrent of human vicissitudes; ye, who see nothing around you now but indigence, misery, and famine; who cry in the bitterness of your grief, No more support, no more protector, no more father: ye are guilty of this second kind of idolatry. *Ye trusted in man, ye made flesh your arm.* Were God the object of your trust, ye would recollect, amidst all your grief, that providence is not inclosed in your patron's tomb: ye would remember, that an invisible eye incessantly watches over, and governs this world; that God, *who feedeth the fowls of heaven, and clothes the lillies of the valley*, that a God so good and compassionate, can easily provide for the maintenance and encouragement of your family.

Luke xii.
24. 28.

And thou, feeble mortal, lying on a sick-bed, already struggling with the *king of terrors*, in the arms of death; thou, who tremblingly complaineest, I am undone! Physicians give me over! Friends are needless! Remedies are useless! Every application is unsuccessful! A cold sweat covers my whole body, and announces my approaching death! Thou art guilty of this second kind of idolatry, thou hast *trusted in man*, thou hast *made flesh thine arm*. Were God the object of thy trust, thou wouldest believe that though death is about to separate thee from men, it is about to unite thee to God: thou wouldest preclude the slavish fear of death by thy fervent desires: thou wouldest exult at the approach of thy redeemer,

Job xviii.
34.

Come

Come Lord, come quickly! Amen. How easy would it be, S E R M.
my brethren, to enlarge this article! IV.

Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry, is the exhortation Rev. xxii.
of an apostle, and with this exhortation we conclude 20.
this discourse, and inforce the design of the prophet 1 Cor. x.
in the text. *Flee from idolatry*, not only from gross
idolatry, but from that, which, though it may appear
less shocking, is no less repugnant to the spirit of
religion. *Why say'st thou, O Jacob; Why speakest
thou, O Israel; My way is hid from the Lord; My
judgment is passed over from my God?* The guardian-
ship of you is that part of the dominion of God of
which he is most jealous. His love for you is so ex-
quisite, that he condescends to charge himself with
your happiness. The happiness which ye feel in commu-
nion with him, is intended to engage you to him: and
the noblest homage, that ye can return, the purest in-
cense, that ye can offer, is to say to him, *Whom have I* Pf. lxxiii.
in heaven but thee? there is none upon earth I desire besides 25, 28.
thee. It is good for me to draw near to God.

If ye place your hopes upon creatures, ye depend
upon winds, and waves, and precarious seasons: upon
the treachery, iniquity, and inconstancy of men: or,
to say all in one word, ye depend upon death. That
poor man is a self-deceiver, who, like the man in
the gospel, saith *within himself, My soul, thou hast much* Luke xii.
goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, 17, 19.
and be merry. But, I expect to find him, yes, I expect
to find him, at the sound of that voice, which may
this very night require his soul, I expect to find him
in a sick bed. There, all pale, distorted, and dying,
let him assemble his gods; let him call for his treasures,
and send for his domestics, and acquaintances; in that
fatal bed let him embrace his Drusillas, and Dalilahs;
let him form harmonious concerts, amuse himself with
fashionable diversions, or feast his eyes with gaudy
decorations, the vacuity and vanity of which, in spite
of himself, he will be obliged to discover.

S E R M. O! give me more solid foundations for my hopes!

IV. May I never build my house upon the sand, endangered by every wind and wave; may the edifice of my felicity be superior to human vicissitudes, and like *mount Sion, which cannot be removed*; may I build upon the Rock of Ages, and be able, in public calamities and in my private misfortunes, above all, in the agonies of death, to appropriate those precious promises, which God hath made to his church in general, and to every individual in it: *The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed.*

Isa. liv. 10.

To this God, of whose grandeur we form such elevated notions, and upon whose promises we found such exalted hopes, be honour and glory for ever, and ever. Amen.

S E R.

S E R M O N V.

The Greatness of God's Wisdom, and
the Abundance of his Power.

THE
GREATNESS OF GOD'S WISDOM, AND
THE ABUNDANCE OF HIS POWER.

S E R M O N V

The Greatness of God's Wisdom, and
the Abundance of his Power.

S E R M O N V.

The Greatness of God's Wisdom, and the
Abundance of his Power.

JEREMIAH xxxii. 19.

Great in counsel and mighty in work.

THESE words are connected with the two preceding verses: *Ab, Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. Thou shewest loving kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is his name, great in counsel, and mighty in work.*

The text, that we have read to you, my brethren, and which, though very short, hath doubtless already excited many grand ideas in your minds, is a homage which the prophet Jeremiah paid to the perfections of God, when they seemed to counteract one another. To make this plain to you, we will endeavour to fix your attention on the circumstances in which our prophet was, when he pronounced the words. This is the best method of explaining the text, and with this we begin.

Jeremiah was actually a martyr to his ministry, when he addressed that prayer to God, of which this text is only a part. He was reduced to the disagreeable necessity of not being able to avail himself of the
rights

S E R M. rights of religion, without invalidating the maxims
 v. of civil government. This is one of the most difficult
 straits, into which the ministers of the living God can
 be brought; for, however they may be opposed, people
 always regard them, if not with intire submission, yet
 with some degree of respect, while they confine them-
 selves to the duties of their own office, and, while, con-
 tent with the speaking of heavenly things, they leave the
 reins of government in the hands of those to whom Pro-
 vidence hath committed them. But when religion and
 civil policy are so united that ministers cannot discharge
 their functions without becoming, in a manner, mini-
 sters of state, without determining whether it be proper
 to make peace, or to declare war, to enter into alli-
 ances or to dissolve them: how extremely delicate and
 difficult does their ministry become? This was our
 prophet's case. Jerusalem had been besieged for the
 space of one year by Nebuchadnezzar's army, and it
 was doubtful whether the city should capitulate with
 that prince, or hold out against him. God his self
 decided this question, by the ministry of the prophet,
 and commanded him in his name to address the Is-
 raelites: *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this*
 3. *city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take*
 4. *it. And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of*
 5. *the hand of the Chaldeans; but shall surely be delivered into*
the hand of the king of Babylon, though ye
fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper.

A prediction so alarming was not uttered with im-
 punity; and Jeremiah was thrown into prison for pro-
 nouncing it: but, before he could well reflect on this
 trial, he was exercised with another, that was more
 painful still. God commanded him to transact an
 affair, which seems at first sight more likely to sink
 his ministry into contempt, than to conciliate people's
 esteem to it. He commanded him to avail himself of
 the right, which every Israelite enjoyed, when his
 nearest relation offered an estate to sale: a right founded
 upon

on an institute recorded in Leviticus. God required S E R M.
 the Israelites to consider him as their sovereign, and v.
 his sovereignty over them was absolute. They cannot Lev. xxv.
 be said to have possessed any thing as proper owners;
 they held every thing conditionally, and in trust; and
 they had no other right in their patrimonial estates
 than what they derived from the arbitrary will of God.
 In order to preserve in them a sense of this depen-
 dence, they were forbidden to sell the lands which
 they inherited from their ancestors: *The land shall not* 23.
be sold for ever, saith the levitical law, for the land is
mine, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me. This
 was not unknown to the heathens, for Diodorus of
 Sicily says, that *the Jews could not sell their inheritances.**

But as it might happen, that a landholder might
 become indigent, and be reduced by this prohibition
 to the danger of dying with hunger, even while he
 had enough to supply all his wants, God had pro-
 vided, that, in such a case, the lands might be sold
 under certain restrictions, which were proper to con-
 vince the seller of that sovereignty, from which he would
 never depart. The principal of those restrictions were
 two; one, that the estate should be rather mortgaged
 than sold, and, at the Jubilee, should return to its first
 master: and hence it is, that, to sell an estate *for ever*, in
 the stile of the Jewish jurisprudence, is to mortgage it
 till the jubilee. The other restriction was, that the
 nearest relation of him, who was obliged to sell his
 land, should have the right of purchasing it before any
 others, either more distant relations or strangers.

In virtue of this law, Jeremiah had a right to pur-
 chase an estate, which Hanameel, the son of Shallum,
 Vol. I. Q had

* The case of the daughters of Zelophedad, related in Numb. xxvii. 8.
 procured a general law of inheritance. If a man died without a
 son, his daughters were to inherit: if without children, his brethren
 were to inherit: if without brethren, his uncle was to inherit: if
 without uncle his nearest relation was his heir. Grocius says that
 this law, which preferred an uncle before a nephew, passed from the
 Jews to the Phenicians, and from the Phenicians into all Africa.

Saurin. Dissert. Tom. II. Disc. vii.

SERM. had offered to sale. The land lay at Anathoth, a town
 v. in the tribe of Benjamin, where our prophet was born, and was actually occupied by the Chaldeans at that time. Jerusalem was besieged, and Jeremiah was fully persuaded, and had even foretold, that it would be taken; that the Jews would be carried away into captivity; and would not be re-established in their own country till their return from Babylon at the expiration of seventy years. What a time to purchase an estate! What a season to improve a right of redemption!

But this command of God to the prophet was full of meaning; God gave it with views similar to, but incomparably surer than, those which the Romans had, when they publicly offered to sell the land where Hannibal was incamped when he was besieging the city of Rome. What the prophet was commanded to do, was designed to be an image of what the Jews should have the liberty of doing after their re-establishment. Ye may ascertain that this was the design of the command given to Jeremiah, if ye attend to the words, which he addressed to God himself, in the twenty-fourth verse of this chapter: *Behold the mounts, the*
 25. *city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans: and thou*
 27. *hast said unto me, O Lord God, Buy thee the field for*
 42. *money. To this the Lord answers, Behold, I am the*
 43. *Lord, the God of all flesh, is there any thing too hard for*
 44. *me? Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this*
people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have
promised them. And fields shall be bought in this land,
whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast, it is
given into the hand of the Chaldeans. Men shall buy
fields for money, and subscribe evidences.

Jeremiah entered into these views, obeyed the command, and believed the promise: but, to fortify himself against such doubts as the distance of its accomplishment might perhaps produce in his mind, he recollected the eminent perfections, and the magnificent works

works of him, from whom the promise came. Now SERM.
V.
when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch, says the prophet, I prayed unto the Lord, saying, Ah! Lord God, behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. . . . Thou art the great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is thy name, great in counsel, and mighty in work.

The considering of the circumstances that attended the text is a sufficient determination of its end and design. The prophet's meaning, which is quite clear, is, that the wisdom of God perfectly comprehended all that would be necessary to re-establish the Jewish exiles in their own land, and that his power could effect it. The words are, however, capable of a nobler and more extensive meaning, and in this larger view we intend to consider them. God is *great in counsel*, either, as the words may be translated, *great in designing*, and *mighty in executing*: or, as the same phrase is rendered in Isaiah, *wonderful in counsel, and excellent* xxviii. 29. *in working*. We will endeavour to give you a just notion of this sublime subject in two different views.

I. We will consider the subject speculatively.

II. We will consider it in a practical light.

We intend, by considering the subject speculatively, to evince the truth of the subject, the demonstration of which is very important to us. By considering it practically, we intend to convince you, on the one hand, of the monstrous extravagance of those men, those little rays of intelligence, who, according to the wise man, pretend to set their *wisdom and counsel against the Lord*: Prov. xxi. and, on the other, of the wisdom of those, who, while³⁰ they regulate their conduct by his laws alone, commit their peace, their life, and their salvation to the care of his providence. This is what I propose to lay before you.

I. O Lord, thou art great in counsel, and mighty in work. Let us consider this proposition speculatively.

Q 2

I shall

S E R M. I shall establish it on two kinds of proofs. The first
 v. shall be taken from the nature of God: the second
 from the history of the world, or rather from the
 history of the church.

1. My first proofs shall be taken from the nature of God; not that it belongs to a preacher to go very deeply into so profound a subject, nor to his auditors to follow all the reflections that he could make: yet we wish, when we speak of the supreme Being, that we might not be always obliged to speak superficially, under pretence that we always speak to plain people. We wish ye had sometimes the laudable ambition, especially when ye assist in this sacred place, of elevating your minds to those sublime objects, of the meditation of which, the occupations, to which your frailties and miseries, or, shall I rather say, your vitiated tastes enslave you, ye are deprived in the ordinary course of your lives.

The nature of God proves that he is *great in counsel*. Consider the perfect knowledge that he hath of all possible beings, as well as of all the beings which do actually exist. We are not only incapable of thoroughly understanding the knowledge that he hath of possible beings; but we are even incapable of forming any idea of it. I am not sure that the reduction of all the objects of our knowledge to two ideas is founded in reason. I do not know whether we be not guilty of some degree of temerity in comprising all real existences in two classes: a class of bodies, and a class of spirits. I leave this question to philosophers; but I maintain, that it argues the highest presumption to affirm, even allowing that every being within our knowledge is either body or spirit, that every thing must be reducible to one of these classes, that not only all real existence, but even all possible existence, must necessarily be either body or spirit. I wonder how human capacities, contracted as they are within limits so narrow, dare be so bold as to prescribe bounds to their

their Creator, and restrain his intelligence within their own sphere. If it were allowable to advance any thing upon the most abstract subject that can be proposed, I would venture to say that it is highly probable, that the same depth of divine intelligence, which conceived the ideas of body and spirit, conceiveth other ideas without end: it is highly probable, that possibility, (if I may be allowed to say so) hath no other bounds than the infinite knowledge of the supreme Being. What an unfathomable depth of meditation, my brethren! to glance at it is to confound one's self. What would our perplexity be if we should attempt to enter it? The knowledge of all possible beings, diversified without end by the same intelligence that imagines them: What designs, or, as our prophet expresseth himself, What *greatness of counsel* doth it afford the supreme Being?

But let us not lose ourselves in the world of possible beings; let us confine our attention to real existences: I am willing even to reduce them to the two classes, which were just now mentioned. Let each of you imagine, my brethren, as far as his ability can reach, how *great* the *counsel* of an intelligence must be, who perfectly knows all that can result from the various arrangements of matter, and from the different modifications of mind.

What *greatness of counsels* must there be in an intelligence, who perfectly knows all that can result from the various arrangements of matter? What is matter? What is body? It is a being divisible into parts, which parts may be variously arranged without end, and from which as many different bodies may arise, as there can be diversities in the arrangement of their parts. Let us proceed from small things to great. Put a grain of wheat to a little earth, warm that earth with the rays of the sun, and the grain of wheat will become an ear laden with a great many grains like that which produced them. Give the parts of these grains an arrangement

SERM. arrangement different from that which they had in the
 V. ear, separate the finer from the coarser parts, mix a few drops of water with the former, and ye will procure a paste: produce a small alteration of the parts of this paste, and it will become bread: let the bread be bruised with the teeth, and it will become flesh, bone, blood, and so on. The same reasoning, that we have applied to a grain of wheat, may be applied to a piece of gold, or to a bit of clay, and we know what a multitude of arts in society have been produced by the knowledge, which mankind have obtained of the different arrangements of which matter is capable.

But mankind can perceive only one point of matter; a point placed between two infinities, an infinitely great, and an infinitely small. Two sorts of bodies exist beside those that are the objects of our senses, one sort is infinitely great, the other infinitely small. Those enormous masses of matter, of which we have only a glimpse, are bodies infinitely great, such as the sun, the stars, and an endless number of worlds in the immensity of space, to us indeed imperceptible, but the existence of which, however, we are obliged to allow. Bodies infinitely small are those minute particles of matter, which are too fine and subtle to be subject to our experiments, and seem to us to have no solidity, only because our senses are too gross to discover them, but which lodge an infinite number of organized beings.

Having laid down these indisputable data, let us see what may be argued from them. If the knowledge that men have obtained of one portion of matter, and of a few different arrangements of which it is capable, hath produced a great number of arts that make society flourish, and without the help of which life itself would be a burden; what would follow if they could discover all matter? What would follow their knowledge of those other bodies, which now absorb
 their

their capacities by their greatness, and escape their experiments by their littleness? What would follow if they could obtain adequate ideas of the various arrangements of which the parts of bodies infinitely great and those of bodies infinitely small are capable? What secrets! What arts! What an infinite source of supplies would that knowledge become!

Now this, my brethren, is the knowledge of the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being knows as perfectly all bodies infinitely great, and all bodies infinitely small, as he knows those bodies between both, which are the objects of human knowledge. The Supreme Being perfectly knows what must result from every different arrangement of the parts of bodies infinitely small, and he perfectly knows what must result from every different arrangement of the parts of bodies infinitely great. What treasures of plans! What myriads of designs! or, to use the language of my text, What *greatness of counsel* must this knowledge supply!

But God knows spirits also as perfectly as he knows bodies. If he knows all that must result from the various arrangements of matter, he also knows all that must result from the different modifications of mind. Let us pursue the same method in this article that we have pursued in the former; let us proceed from small things to great ones. One of the greatest advantages, that a man can acquire over other men with whom he is connected, is a knowledge of their different capacities, the various passions that govern them, and the multiform projects that run in their minds. This kind of knowledge forms profound politicians, and elevates them above the rest of mankind. The same observation, that we have made of the superiority of one politician over another politician, we may apply to one citizen compared with another citizen. The interest, which we have in discovering the designs of our neighbours in a city, a house, or a family, is in the little
what

II. SERM. what policy among princes and potentates is in the great world.

V.

But, as I just now said of the material world, that we knew only one point, which was placed between two undiscoverable infinities, an infinitely great, and an infinitely small; so I say of the world of spirits: an infinite number of spirits exist, which, in regard to us, are some of them infinitely minute, and others infinitely grand. We are ignorant of the manner of their existence; we hardly know whether they do exist. We are incapable of determining whether they have any influence over our happiness, or, if they have, in what their influence consists: so that in this respect we are absolutely incapable of *counsel*.

But God, the supreme being, knows the intelligent world as perfectly as he knows the material world. Human spirits, of which we have but an imperfect knowledge, are thoroughly known to him. He knows the conceptions of our minds, the passions of our hearts, all our purposes, and all our powers. The conceptions of our minds are occasioned by the agitation of our brains; God knows when the brain will be agitated, and when it will be at rest, and before it is agitated he knows what determinations will be produced by its motion: Consequently he knows all the conceptions of our minds. Our passions are excited by the presence of certain objects; God knows when those objects will be present, and consequently he knows whether we shall be moved with desire or aversion, hatred or love. When our passions are excited we form certain purposes to gratify them, and these purposes will either be effected or defeated according to that degree of natural or civil power which God hath given us. God, who gave us our degree of power, knows how far it can go; and consequently he knows not only what purposes we form, but what power we have to execute them.

But.

But what is this object of the divine knowledge? S E R M.
VI
What is this handful of mankind, in comparison of all the other spirits that compose the whole intelligent world, of which we are only an inconsiderable part? God knows them as he knows us; and he diversifies the counsels of his own wisdom according to the different thoughts, deliberations, and wishes of these different spirits. What a depth of knowledge, my brethren! What greatness of counsel! *Ab, Lord God, behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. The great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is thy name, thou art great in counsel.*

We have proved then, by considering the divine perfections, that God is great in counsel, and we shall endeavour to prove by the same method that he is mighty in work.

These two, wisdom and power, are not always united; yet it is on their union that the happiness of intelligent beings depends. It would be often better to be quite destitute of both, than to possess one in a very great, and the other in a very small degree. Wisdom very often serves only to render him miserable, who is destitute of power; as power often becomes a source of misery to him who is destitute of wisdom.

Have ye never observed, my brethren, that people of the finest and most enlarged geniusses, have often the least success of any people in the world? This may appear at first sight very unaccountable, but a little attention will explain the mystery. A narrow, contracted mind usually concentrates itself in one single object: it wholly employs itself in forming projects of happiness proportional to its own capacity, and, as its capacity is extremely shallow, it easily meets with the means of executing them. But this is not the case with a man of superior genius, whose fruitful fancy forms notions of happiness grand and sublime. He

“*S E R M.* invents noble plans; involuntarily gives himself up
 V. to his own chimeras, and derives a pleasure from these ingenious shadows, which, for a few moments, compensates for their want of substance: but, when his reverie is over, he finds real beings inferior to ideal ones, and thus his genius serves to make him miserable. A man is much to be pitied, in my opinion, when the penetration of his mind, and the fruitfulness of his invention, furnish him with ideas of a delightful society cemented by a faithful, solid and delicate friendship. Recall him to this world, above which his imagination had just now raised him; consider him among men, who know nothing of friendship but its name, or, who have at best only a superficial knowledge of it, and ye will be convinced that the art of inventing is often the art of self-tormenting, or, as I said before, that *greatness of counsels* destitute of *abundance of power* is a source of infelicity.

It is just the same with *abundance of power* without *greatness of counsels*. What doth it avail to possess great riches, to reign over a great people, to command formidable fleets and armies, when this power is not accompanied with wisdom?

In God, the supreme being, there is a perfect harmony of wisdom and power: The efficiency of his will, and the extent of his knowledge are equal. But, I own, I am afraid, were I to pursue my meditation, and to attempt to establish this proposition by proofs taken from the divine nature, that I should lose, if not myself, at least one part of my hearers, by aiming to conduct them into a world, with which they are entirely unacquainted. However, I must say, that with reluctance I make this sacrifice, for I suppress speculations, which would afford no small degree of pleasure to those who could pursue them. It is delightful to elevate our souls in meditating on the grandeurs of God; and although God *dwelleth in a light which no man can approach unto*, although it is impossible

possible for feeble mortals to have a free access to SERM.
w. him, yet it is pleasing to endeavour to diminish the distance that separates them. I cannot but think, that, without presuming too much upon natural reason, any one, who habituates himself to consult it, may assure himself of finding sufficient evidence of this truth, that the efficiency of God's will is equal to the extensiveness of his ideas, and, by close and necessary consequence, that he is as *mighty in work* as he is *great in counsel*.

Carry your thoughts back into those periods in which the Perfect Being existed alone. Sound reason must allow that he hath so existed. What could then have been the rule or model of beings which should in future exist? The ideas of God were those models. And what could cause those beings, that had only an ideal existence in the intelligence of God, actually to exist out of it? The efficiency of his will was the cause. The will of the same Being then, whose ideas had been the exemplars, or models, of the attributes of creatures, caused their existence. The Supreme Being therefore, who is *great in counsel*, is *mighty in work*.

This being granted, consider now the ocean of God's *power*, as ye have already considered the *greatness of his counsel*. God not only knows what motion of your brain will excite such or such an idea in your mind, but he excites or prevents that idea as he pleaseth, because he produceth or preventeth that motion of your brain as he pleaseth. God not only knows what objects will excite certain passions within you, but he excites or diverts those passions as he pleaseth. God not only knows what projects your passions will produce, when they have gained an ascendancy over you, but he inclines you to form, or not to form, such projects, because, as it seems best to him, he excites those passions, or he curbs them.

SERM.

v.

What we affirm of men, we affirm also of all other intelligent beings: they are no less the objects of the knowledge of God than men are, and, like them, are equally subject to his efficient will: and hence it is that God knows how to make all fulfil his designs. It is by this that he makes every thing subservient to his glory; Herod and Pilate, our hatred and our love, our aversions and our desires, the ten thousand times ten thousand intelligences, some of which are superior to us, and others inferior, all that they are, all that they have, the praises of the blessed and the blasphemies of the damned, all by this mean are instrumental in the execution of his designs, because the determinations of his will are efficient, because to will and to do, to form a plan and to have the power of executing it, is the same thing with the Supreme Being, with him whose ideas were the only models of the attributes of all creatures, as his will was the only cause of their existence.

But perhaps I am falling into what I meant to avoid; perhaps I am bewildering my hearers and myself in speculative labyrinths too intricate for us all. Let us reason then no longer on the nature of God; this object is too high for us: Let us take another method, (and here I alledge the second proof of the truth of my text, that is, the history of the world, or, as I said before, the history of the church :) Let us take, I say, another method of proving that God, who is *great in counsel*, is also *mighty in work*. What counsel can ye imagine too great for God to execute, or which he hath not really executed? Let the most fruitful imagination exert its fertility to the utmost; let it make every possible effort to form plans worthy of an infinite intelligence, it can invent nothing so difficult that God hath not realized,

It should seem, according to our manner of reasoning, that *greatness of wisdom* and *sufficiency of power* never appear in greater harmony in an intelligent being,

being, than when that intelligence produceth effects *SEEM.*
by means, in all appearance, more likely to produce *v.*
contrary effects. This, we are sure, God hath
effected, and doth effect every day. And, that we
may proportion this discourse, not to the extent of
my subject, but to the length of these exercises, we
will briefly remark, that God hath the power of
making, 1. The deepest afflictions of his children pro-
duce their highest happiness. 2. The contrivances of
tyrants to oppress the church procure its establishment.
3. The triumphs of Satan turn to the destruction of
his empire.

1. God hath the power of making the deepest of
his children's afflictions produce their highest hap-
piness.

The felicity of the children of God, and, in general,
the felicity of all intelligent beings, is founded upon
order. All happiness that is not founded upon order
is a violent state, and must needs be of a short du-
ration. But the essence of order, among intelligent
beings, is the assigning of that place in their affections
to every relative being which is fit for it. Now there
is a fitness in having a higher esteem for a being of
great excellencies than for one of small. There is a
fitness in my having a higher degree of affection for
one of whom I have received more benefits, and from
whom I still expect to receive more, than for one of
whom I have received, and still hope to receive, fewer.
But God is a being of the highest excellence, to God
therefore I owe the highest degree of esteem. God is
the being of whom I have received the most benefits,
and of whom I expect to receive the most; con-
sequently, to God I owe the highest degree of af-
fectionate gratitude.

Yet, how often do the children of God lose sight
of this grand principle? I do not speak only of a few
absent moments, in which the power of thought and
reflection is, in a manner, gone; nor do I mean only
those

“ S E R M. those violent passions which criminal objects excite:
 v. I speak of a poison much less sensible, and therefore perhaps much more dangerous. We will give you one example out of many.

Two pious persons enter into the honourable state of marriage on principles of virtue, and compose a family that reveres the Creator by considering him as the only source of all the blessings which they enjoy. Their happiness consists in celebrating the beneficence and perfections of the adorable God, and all their possessions they devote to his glory. He blesteth their union by multiplying those who compose it, and their children imbibe knowledge and virtue from the womb. The parents taste the most delicious pleasure in the world, in cultivating the promising geniusses of their children, and in seeing the good grain, which they sow in a field favoured of heaven, produce *in one thirty, in another sixty, in another an hundred fold*, and they delight themselves with the hopes of giving one child to the state, and another to the church; this to an art, and that to a science, and thus of enriching society with the most valuable of all treasures, virtuous and capable citizens. All on a sudden this delicious union is poisoned and dissolved; this amiable fondness is interrupted; those likely projects are disconcerted: an unexpected catastrophe sweeps away that fortune, by which alone their designs for their family could have been accomplished; the child of their greatest hopes is cut down in the beginning of his race; the head of the family expires at a time in which his life is most necessary to it. A disconsolate widow, an helpless family exposed to every danger, are the sad remains of a house just now a model of the highest human happiness, and, in all appearance, of the purest piety. Is not this the depth of misery?

From this depth of misery, however, ariseth the highest felicity. The prosperity, of which we have been speaking, was so much the more dangerous by
 how

how much the more innocent it appeared; for if the persons in question had founded it in vice, they would have quickly forsaken it, as wholly incompatible with their pious principles; but, as they had founded it in piety, there is great reason to fear that they had placed too much of their happiness in earthly prosperity, and that it had almost entirely engaged the attention of their minds, and set bounds to the desires of their hearts. But what is it to engage the mind too much in temporal prosperity? It is to lose sight of God our chief good in a world where at best we can obtain but an imperfect knowledge of him. What is it to confine the desires of our hearts to earthly happiness? It is to forget our best interest in a world, where, when we have carried that love, which God so abundantly merits, to the highest pitch, we can offer him but a very imperfect service. Every object that produceth such an effect occupies a place in the heart, which is due to none but God. And while any other fills the seat of God in the heart, we may indeed have a kind of happiness, but it must be a happiness contrary to order; it is violent and it must be short. I am aware that the loss will be bitter in the same degree as the enjoyment had been sweet; but the bitterness will produce ineffable pleasures, infinitely preferable to all those that have been taken away. It will reclaim us again to God, the only object worthy of our love, the alone fountain of all our felicity. This may be inferred from many declarations of scripture, and from the lives of many exemplary saints, as well as from your own experience, if indeed, my dear hearers, when God hath torn away the objects of your tenderest affection, ye have been so wise as to make this use of your losses, to re-establish order in your hearts, and to give that place to God in your souls which the object held of which ye have been deprived.

2. God establisheth his church by the very means that tyrants use to destroy it. But the reflections which

SERMON, which naturally belong to this article, ye heard a few weeks ago, when we explained these words in the Revelation, *Here is the patience of the saints.** We endeavoured then to prevent the gloomy fears that might be occasioned in your minds by those new edicts, which Rome, always intent upon making *the kings of the earth drunk with her fornication*, had extorted against your brethren. We exhorted you, in the greatest tribulations of the church, never to lose sight of that divine providence which watches to preserve it.

We reminded you of some great truths that proceeded from the mouth of God himself; such as, that the *Assyrian* was only *the rod of his anger*; that *Herod and Pilate* did only *what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done*. These truths should be always in our minds, for there never was a time when we had more need to meditate on them. The distresses of our brethren seem to be past remedy. To incorporate our felicity with that of a church, a considerable part of which hath been so long bathed in tears, seems as irrational as the conduct of Jeremiah, who, just before the desolation of Judea, purchased an estate in that devoted country with the money which he wanted to alleviate his captivity in Babylon. Yet, O Lord God, *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, is there any thing too hard for thee? Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power, and by thy stretched out arm. Thou art the great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is thy name; great in counsel, and mighty in work.

3. Finally, God turneth the victories of Satan to the ruin of his empire. Here fix your attention upon the work of redemption, for the perfections of God, which we celebrate to day, are more illustriously displayed in it than in any other of the creator's wonders. It is, if I may be allowed to express myself so, the utmost effort of the concurrence of the *greatness of his counsels* with

* This is the seventh sermon of the twelfth vol. and is intitled, *Les Nouveaux Malheurs de l'Eglise*.

with the *abundance of his power*. I resume this subject, S E R M.
 not for the sake of filling up my plan, but because V.
 my text cannot be well explained without it. Those
 inspired writers, who lived under the old testament
 dispensation, always mixed something of the gospel
 redemption with the temporal deliverances which they
 foretold. One of the strongest reasons, that they urged
 to convince the Jewish exiles that God would restore
 their country to them, was that their return was essen-
 tial to the accomplishment of the promises relating to
 the Messiah. Jeremiah particularly uses this method
 in the verses which are connected with the text. Why
 doth he exalt the *greatness of God's counsel*, and the
abundance of his power? Is it only because, as he ex-
 presseth it, *God would gather the Jews out of all countries* Ver. 37.
whither he had driven them in his fury: so that men
should buy fields in the places about Jerusalem? No, but
 it is because he would make an everlasting covenant with 40.
 them. It is because at that time he would cause the branch xxxiii. 15
 of righteousness to grow up unto David. Who is this
 branch? It is he of whom our prophet had before
 spoken in the twenty-third chapter of his prophecy:
Behold the days come that I will raise unto David a Ver. 5.
righteous branch. It is he of whom Isaiah said, *The* Isa. iv. 2.
branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious. It is
 he whom God promised by Zechariah after the cap-
 tivity, in order to convince the Jews that the promises
 concerning the branch had not been accomplished by
 their release: *Behold the man whose name is The Branch,* Zech. vi.
he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the 12.
temple of the Lord. It is he whom the Jews themselves
 have acknowledged for the Messiah. It is the *holy*
seed, who was promised to man after the fall, and who
 hath been the object of the church's hope in all ages.
 It is eminently in behalf of this branch that God hath
 displayed, as I said before, in all their grandeur, the
abundance of his power, and the *greatness of his counsel*.
 I do not speak here of that counsel, which hath been

S E R M. from all eternity, in the intelligence of God, touching
 v. the redemption of mankind. My capacity is absorbed,
 I own, in contemplating so grand an object, and to
 admire and to exclaim seem more suitable to our finite
 minds than to attempt to fathom such a prodigious
 depth: for where is the genius that can form adequate
 ideas of a subject so profound? A God, who from
 all eternity formed the plan of this universe: a God,
 who from all eternity foresaw whatever would result
 from its arrangement: a God, who, from all eternity,
 resolved to create mankind, although he knew from
 all eternity that they would fall into sin, and plunge
 themselves into everlasting miseries: but a God, who,
 foreseeing from all eternity the malady, from all eter-
 nity provided the remedy: a God, who from ever-
 lasting determined to clothe his son in mortal flesh,
 and to send him into the world: a God, who, accord-
 ing to the language of scripture, *slew*, in his design
 from all eternity, *the lamb* But, I
 Rev. xiii. repeat it again, my brethren, it better becomes such
 8. feeble minds as ours to admire and to exclaim, than
 to attempt to fathom. Let us content ourselves with
 beholding in the execution of this divine plan, how
 the victories of Satan have subverted his empire.

What a victory for Satan, when that redeemer, that
 king Messiah, whose advent had been announced with
 so much pomp and magnificence, appeared in a form
 so mean, and so inferior to the expectations which the
 prophecies had occasioned, and to the extraordinary
 work for which he came into the world, when he
 lodged in a stable, and lay in a manger!

What a triumph for Satan, when Jesus had no at-
 tendants but a few miserable fishermen, and a few
 publicans as contemptible as their master!

What a victory for Satan, when Jesus was appre-
 hended as a malefactor, dragged from one tribunal to
 another, and, in fine, condemned by his judges to die!

Wha

What a victory had Satan obtained, when the object S E R M.
of Israel's hopes was nailed to an accursed tree, and v.
there ended a life, upon which seemed to depend the
salvation of mankind!

What a triumphant victory for Satan, when he had
inspired the nation of the risen redeemer to treat the
report of his resurrection as an imposture, and to
declare an everlasting war against him in the persons
of all who durst declare in his favour!

But however, the more impracticable the redemption
of mankind seemed, the more did God display *the*
greatness of his counsel and *the abundance of his power*
in effecting it: for he turned all the triumphs of
Satan to the destruction of his dominion.

The Branch was lodged in a stable, the king of the
universe did lie in a manger; but a star in the heavens
announced his birth, angels conducted worshippers to
him from the most distant eastern countries, and joined
their own adorations to those of the wise men, who
offered to him their gold, their frankincense and their
myrrh.

His attendants were only a few fishermen and pub-
licans; but this served the more effectually to secure
his doctrine from the most odious objections that could
be opposed against it. The meaner the vessel appears,
the more excellent seems the treasure contained in it:
the weaker the instruments employed in building the
church appear, the more evident will the ability of
the builder be. These fishermen confounded philo-
sophers; these publicans struck the Rabbies dumb;
the winds and the waves were subject to their au-
thority; and to their commands all the powers of
nature were seen to bow.

He was apprehended like a malefactor, and crucified;
but upon the cross he bruised the serpent's head while
Satan vaunted of bruising his heel. Upon the cross Gen. iii.
he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of Col. ii. 15.
them openly, triumphing over them in it.

S E R M. He was wrapped in burying clothes, laid on a bier,
 V. and, with all the mournful furniture of death, deposited in a tomb: but by this he conquered death,
 1 Cor. xv. 56. and disarmed him of his *sting*. By this he furnished thee, christian, with armour of proof against the attacks of the tyrant, who would enslave thee, and whose formidable approaches have caused thee so many fears.

Job xviii. 14. He was rejected by his own countrymen, even after he had risen victorious from the tomb, laden with the spoils of *the king of terrors*: but their rejection of him animated his apostles to shake off the dust from their feet against those execrable men, who, after they had murdered the master, endeavoured to destroy the disciples, and put them upon lifting up the standard of the cross in every other part of the universe, and thus the heathen world was bound to his triumphal chariot, and the whole earth saw the accomplishment of those prophecies which had foretold that he should *reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*. How great *the counsell* my dear brethren, how mighty *the work*! Ah, Lord God, there is nothing too hard for thee. Thou art *the great, the mighty God, the Lord of hosts is thy name, great in counsel, and mighty in work*.

Here we may pause, and very properly come to a conclusion of this discourse; for, though we proposed at first to consider *the greatness of God's counsel, and the omnipotence of his working*, in a practical light, after having examined them speculatively, yet, methinks, the examination of the subject in one point of light, is the explication of it in both. When we have proved that God is *great in counsel, and mighty in work*, in my opinion, we have sufficiently shown, on the one hand, the extravagance of those madmen, who, in the language of the wise man, pretend to exercise *wisdom and understanding*, and *counsel against the Lord*: and, on the other, the wisdom of those, who, taking his laws for the only rules of their conversation, commit their peace, their lives, and their salvations, to the disposal of

Prov. xxi.
30.

of his providence. Only let us take care, my dear SERM.
brethren, (and with this single exhortation we con-
clude) let us take care, that we do not flatter ourselves
into an opinion that we possess this wisdom while we
are destitute of it: and let us take care, while we
exclaim against the extravagance of those madmen,
of whom I just now spoke, that we do not imitate
their dangerous examples.

But what! Is it possible to find, among beings who
have the least spark of reason, an individual mad
enough to suppose himself wiser than that God, who
is *great in counsel*, or, is there one who dare resist a
God *mighty in working*? My brethren, one of the most
difficult questions, that we meet with in the study of
human nature, is, whether some actions in men's lives
proceed from intentions in their minds. To affirm,
or to deny, is equally difficult. On the one hand, we
can hardly believe that an intelligent creature can
revolve intentions in his mind directly opposite to in-
telligence, and the extravagance of which the least ray
of intelligence seems sufficient to discover. On the
other, we can hardly think it possible, that this creature
should follow a course of life altogether founded on
such an intention, if indeed he have it not in his mind.
The truth is, a question of this kind may be either
affirmed or denied according to the different lights in
which it is considered. Put these questions to the
most irregular of mankind: Dost thou pretend to
oppose God? Hast thou the presumption to attempt
to prevail over him by thy superiority of knowledge,
and power? Put these questions simply, apart from
the conduct, and ye will hardly meet with one, who
will not answer No. But examine the conduct, not only
of the most irregular men, but even of those, who im-
agine that their behaviour is the most prudent; penetrate
those secret thoughts, which they involve in darkness
in order to conceal the horror of them from themselves;
and ye will soon discover that they, who answered so
pertinently

SERMON. pertinently to your questions when ye proposed them
 V. simply, will actually take the opposite side when ye
 propose the same questions relatively. But who then,
 ye will ask me, who are those men, who presumptuously
 think of overcoming God by their superior knowledge
 and power?

Who? It is that soldier, who, with a brutal courage,
 defies danger, affronts death, resolutely marches amidst
 fires and flames, even though he hath taken no care to
 have an interest in the Lord of hosts, or to commit his
 soul to his trust.

Who? It is that statesman, who, despising the sug-
 gestions of evangelical prudence, pursues stratagems
 altogether worldly; who makes no scruple of com-
 mitting what are called *state-crimes*; who, with a dis-
 dainful air, affects to pity us, when we affirm, that the
 most advantageous service, that a wise legislator can
 perform for society, is to render the Deity propitious
 to it; that the happiest nations are those *whose God is*
the Lord.

Pf. xxxiii.
 12.

Who? It is that philosopher, who makes a parade
 of I know not what stoical firmness; who conceits
 himself superior to all the vicissitudes of life; who
 boasts of his tranquil expectation of death, yea, who
 affects to desire its approach, for the sake of enjoying
 the pleasure of insulting his casuist, who hath ventured
 to foretel that he will be terrified at it.

Who? It is that voluptuary, who opposeth to all
 our exhortations and threatnings, to the most affecting
 denunciations of calamities from God in this life, and
 to the most awful descriptions of judgment to come in
 the next, to all our representations of hell, of an eter-
 nity spent in the most execrable company, and in the
 most excruciating pain; who opposeth to all these the
 buz of amusements, the hurry of company, gaming
 at home or diversions abroad.

Study all these characters, my brethren, lay aside
 the specious appearances that men use to conceal their
 turpitude

turpitude from themselves, and ye will find that, to S E R M.
dare the deity, to pretend by superior knowledge and V.
strength to resist the wisdom and omnipotence of God,
is not so rare a disposition as ye may at first have
supposed.

Let us abhor this disposition of mind, my brethren;
let us entertain right notions of sin; let us consider
him who commits it as a madman, who hath taken it
into his head that he hath more knowledge than God
the fountain of intelligence, more strength than he
beneath whose power all the creatures of the universe
are compelled to bow. When we are tempted to sin,
let us remember what sin is: Let each of us ask him-
self, What can I, a miserable man, mean? Do I mean
to *provoke the Lord to jealousy*? Do I pretend to <sup>i Cor. x.
22.</sup>
be *stronger than he*? Can I *resist his will*? Shall I ^{Rom. ix.} *set*
briers and thorns against him in battle? ^{19.} *He will go*
through them, he will burn them together. <sup>Iia. xxvii.
5.</sup> Let us seek
those benefits in a communion with the great God, of
which our fanciful passions can only offer the shadows.
Let us not pretend to deceive him by the subtilty of
our stratagems; but let us endeavour to please him by
acknowledging our doubts, our darkness, and our ig-
norance; the fluctuations of our minds about the
government of the state, the management of our fa-
milies, and, above all, the salvation of our souls. Let
us not appear in his presence boasting of our natural
power; but let us present ourselves before him weak,
trembling, and undone. By the greatness of his com-
passion let us plead with him to pity our meanness
and misery. Let our supplies flow from the fountains
of his wisdom and power; this is real wisdom; may
God inspire us with it! This is substantial happiness;
may God impart it to us! Amen. To him be honour
and glory for ever.

S E R.

S E R M O N VI.

The HOLINESS of G O D.

Vol. I. T

S E R M O N

The Holiness of God

The holiness of God is a subject of great importance and interest to all who love Him. It is the foundation of our faith and the basis of our hope. We must understand the holiness of God in order to love Him and to obey His commands. The holiness of God is His attribute of being set apart from all other things and persons. It is His purity and His righteousness. It is His love and His mercy. It is His power and His wisdom. It is His glory and His majesty. The holiness of God is the source of all life and all blessing. It is the light of our lives and the joy of our hearts. It is the strength of our arms and the shield of our faces. It is the peace of our minds and the comfort of our souls. The holiness of God is the foundation of our faith and the basis of our hope. We must understand the holiness of God in order to love Him and to obey His commands. The holiness of God is His attribute of being set apart from all other things and persons. It is His purity and His righteousness. It is His love and His mercy. It is His power and His wisdom. It is His glory and His majesty. The holiness of God is the source of all life and all blessing. It is the light of our lives and the joy of our hearts. It is the strength of our arms and the shield of our faces. It is the peace of our minds and the comfort of our souls.

S E R M O N VI.

The HOLINESS of GOD.

LEVITICUS xix. 1, 2.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.

I Address to all the faithful, whom the devotion of this day hath assembled in this sacred place, the command, which Moses, by the authority of God, addressed to all the congregation of Israel. However venerable this assembly may be, to which I am this day called by Providence to preach, it cannot be more august than that to which the Jewish legislator formerly spoke. It was composed of more than eighteen hundred thousand persons. There were magistrates, appointed to exercise justice, and to represent God upon earth. There were priests and levites, consecrated to the worship of God, and chosen by him to signify his will to the church. There were various ranks and degrees of men proportional to so great a multitude of people. God had given particular laws before, which were adapted to their different ranks, and to their various circumstances. But this is a general law: a law which equally belongs to magistrates, priests and levites: a law which must be observed at all times, and in all places. This is the law of holiness; *Speak unto all the congregation of the*
T 2 *children*

SERM. *children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.*

VI.

I repeat it again, my brethren, I address to all the faithful, whom the devotion of this day hath assembled in this sacred place, the same precept that God commanded Moses to address to all the congregation of Israel. The law of holiness, which I preach to day, commands you our supreme governors. Arbiters of your own laws, ye see no mortal upon earth to whom ye are accountable for your conduct, but there is a God in heaven, whose creatures and subjects ye are, and who commands you to be holy. The law of holiness commands you, priests and levites of the new testament. The sacred character, with which ye are invested, far from dispensing with your obligation to holiness, inforceth it on you in a more particular manner. This law commands you all, my dear hearers, of what order, of what profession, of what

1 Pet. ii.
9.

rank soever ye be. If ye be *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people*, ye ought also to be *a holy nation, that ye may shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*. Whatever prerogative Moses had above us, we have the same law to prescribe to you, that he had to Israel, and the voice of heaven saith to us now, as it said once to him, *Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.*

This discourse will have three parts. The term *holiness* is equivocal, and, consequently, the command, *ye shall be holy*, is so. We will endeavour to fix the sense of the term, and to give you a clear and distinct idea of the word *holiness*: this will be our first point.

Holiness, which, in our text, is attributed to God, and prescribed to men, cannot belong to such different beings in the same sense, and in all respects. We will therefore examine in what sense it belongs to God, and in what sense it belongs to men; and we will endeavour

deavour to explain in what respects *God is holy*, and in S E R M.
what respects men ought to be *holy*: this will be our V I I
second part.

Although the holiness, that is attributed to God, differs in many respects from that which is prescribed to men, yet the first is the ground of the last. The connection of these must be developed, and the motive enforced, *ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*: this shall be our third part. And this is the substance of all that we intend to propose.

I. The term *holiness* is equivocal, and, consequently, the command, *ye shall be holy*, is so. Let us endeavour to affix a determinate sense to the term, and to give you a clear and distinct idea of the meaning of the word *holiness*. The original term is one of the most vague words in the Hebrew language. In general, it signifies, to prepare, to set apart, to devote. The nature of the subject, to which it is applied, and not the force of the term, must direct us to determine its meaning in passages where it occurs. An appointment to offices the most noble, and the most worthy of intelligent beings, and an appointment to offices the most mean and infamous, are alike expressed by this word. The profession of the most august office of the high priesthood, and the abominable profession of a prostitute, are both called *holiness* in this vague sense.

The poorest languages are those in which words are the most equivocal, and this is the character of the Hebrew language. I cannot think, with some, that it is the most ancient language in the world; the contrary opinion, I think, is supported by very sufficient evidence. However, it must be granted, that it hath one grand character of antiquity, that is, its imperfection. It seems to have been invented in the first ages of the world, when mankind could express their ideas but imperfectly, and before they had time to render language determinate, by affixing arbitrary names to all the objects of their ideas.

This

SERM. This remark may at first appear useless, particularly
 VI. in such a discourse as this. It is, however, of great consequence; and I make it here for the sake of young students in divinity: for, as the writers of the holy scriptures frequently make use of terms, that excite several ideas, the reasons of their chusing such terms will be enquired: and on such reasons, as the fancies of students assign, some maxims, and even some doctrines will be grounded. I could mention more mysteries than one, that have been found in scripture, only because on some occasions it useth equivocal terms. An interpreter of scripture, should indeed assiduously urge the force of those emphatical expressions, which the holy spirit sometimes useth to signify, if I may so speak, the ground and substance of the truth; but, at the same time, he should avoid searching after the marvellous in other expressions, that are employed only for the sake of accommodating the discourse to the genius of the Hebrew tongue.

The force of the term *holiness*, then, not being sufficient to determine its meaning, its meaning must be sought elsewhere. We must enquire the object, to which he devotes himself, who, in our scriptures, is called *holy*. For, as all those words, *ye shall be holy, for I am holy*, are equal to these, *ye shall be set apart, or ye shall be devoted, for I am set apart, or devoted*, it is plain, that they cannot be well explained unless the object of the appointment or designation be determined. This object is the matter of our present enquiry, and on the investigation of this depends our knowledge of what we call *holiness*. Now, this subject is of such a kind, that the weakest christian may form some idea of it, while the ablest philosophers, and the most profound divines, are incapable of treating it with precision, and of answering all the questions that a desire of a complete explication may produce.

The weakest christians may form (especially if they be willing to avail themselves of such helps as are at hand)

hand) some just notions of what we call *holiness*. It SERM.
seems to me, that, in this auditory at least, there is not VI.
one person, who is incapable of pursuing the following
meditation; to which I intreat your attention.

Suppose, in a world entirely remote from you, a
society, to which ye have no kind of relation, and to
which ye never can have any. Suppose that God had
dispensed with an obedience to his laws in favour of
this society, had permitted the members of it to live as
they thought proper, and had assured them that he would
neither inflict any punishment upon them for what we
call *vice*, nor bestow any rewards on an attachment to
what we call *virtue*. Suppose two men, in this society,
making an opposite use of this independence. The one
saith to himself, Since I am the arbiter of my own con-
duct, and the Supreme Being, on whom I depend,
hath engaged to require no account of my actions, I
will consult no other rule of conduct than my own
interest. Whenever it may be my interest to deny a
trust reposed in me, I will do it without reluctance.
Whenever my interest may require the destruction of
my tenderest and most faithful friend, I myself will
become his executioner, and will stab him. Thus
reasons one of them.

The other, on the contrary, saith, I am free indeed,
I am responsible only to myself for my conduct, but
however, I will prescribe to myself some rules of action,
which I will inviolably pursue. I will never betray a
trust reposed in me, but I will, with the utmost fidelity,
discharge it, whatever interest I may have to do other-
wise. I will carefully preserve the life of my friend,
who discovers so much fidelity and love to me,
whatever interest I may have in his destruction. We
ask those of our hearers, who are the least acquainted
with meditations of this kind, whether they can prevail
with themselves not to make an essential difference
between those two members of the supposed society?
We ask, whether ye can help feeling a horror at the
first,

S E R M. first, and a veneration for the last of these men? Now,
 VI. this conduct, or the principles of this conduct, for which we cannot help feeling veneration and respect, although the whole passeth in a world, and in a society, to which we have no relation, and to which we never can have any, these are the principles, I say, to which he is devoted, whom our scriptures call *holy*: these principles are what we call *virtue, rectitude, order*, or, as the text expresseth it, *holiness*. *Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.*

Let us proceed a little farther in our meditation, and let us make a supposition of another kind. Ye have all some idea of God. Ye have at least this notion of him, that he is supremely independent, and that none can punish or reward him for the use he makes of his independence. Suppose, as well as ye can without blasphemy, that he should lavish his favours on the faithless depositary, whom we just now mentioned, and should withhold them from the other: that he should heap benefits upon him, who would stab his tenderest and most faithful friend, and expose the other to indigence and misery. Suppose, on the contrary, that God should liberally bestow his favours on the faithful depositary, and refuse them to the other. I ask those of my hearers, who are the least acquainted with a meditation of this kind, whether they can help making an essential difference between these two uses of independence? Can ye help feeling more veneration and respect for the Supreme Being in the latter case than in the former? Now, my brethen, I repeat it again, the laws, according to which the Supreme Being acts, are the laws to which the person is appointed, or set apart, who, in the holy scriptures, is denominated *holy*. Conformity to these laws is what we call *virtue, rectitude, order*, or, as the text expresseth it, *holiness*. In this manner, it seems to me, that the weakest christian (if he avail himself of such helps as are offered to him) may form an adequate idea of *holiness*.

However,

However, it is no less certain that the ablest philosophers, and the most consummate divines, find it difficult to speak with precision on this subject, and to answer all the questions that have arisen about it. Perhaps its perspicuity may be one principal cause of this difficulty: for it is a rule, of which we inform those to whom we teach the art of reasoning justly, that when an idea is brought to a certain degree of evidence and simplicity, every thing that is added to elucidate serves only to obscure and to perplex it. Hath not one part of our difficulties about the nature of right and wrong arisen from the breach of this rule?

SERM.
VI.

From what we have heard, in my opinion, we may infer, that all mankind have a clear and distinct idea of holiness, even though they have no terms to express their ideas of it with justness and precision. It seems to me that every mechanic is able to decide the following questions, although they have occasioned so many disputes in schools. On what is the difference between a just and an unjust action founded; on interest only? or, on the will of the Supreme Being only, who hath prescribed such or such a law? For, since we cannot help execrating a man who violates certain laws, tho' the violation doth not at all affect our interest, it is plain, we cannot help acknowledging, when we reflect on our own ideas, that the difference between a just and an unjust action is not founded on interest only. And since we cannot help venerating the Supreme Being more when he follows certain laws than when he violates them, it is plain, we cannot help acknowledging that there is a justice independent on the supreme law which hath prescribed it.

Should any one require me to give him a clear notion of this *justice*, this *order*, or *holiness*, which is neither founded on the interest of him who obeys it, nor on the authority of the Supreme Being who commands it; this should be my answer.

S E R M. By *justice* I understand that fitness, harmony, or proportion, which ought to be between the conduct of an intelligent being, and the circumstances in which he is placed, and the relations that he bears to other beings. For example, there is a relation between a benefactor who bestows, and an indigent person who receives, a benefit; from this relation results a proportion, a harmony, or a fitness, between benefit and gratitude, which makes gratitude a virtue. On the contrary, between benefit and ingratitude there is a disproportion, a dissonance, or an incongruity, which makes ingratitude injustice. In like manner, between one man, who is under oppression, and another, who hath the power of terminating the oppression by punishing the oppressor, there is a certain relation from which results a proportion, a harmony, or a fitness in relieving the oppressed, which makes the relief an act of generosity and justice.

All mankind have a general notion of this proportion, harmony, or fitness. If they are sometimes dubious about their duty, if they sometimes hesitate about the conduct that justice requires of them on certain occasions, it is not because they doubt whether every action ought to have that which I call *proportion*, *harmony*, or *fitness*; but it is because, in some intricate cases, they do not clearly perceive the relation of a particular action to their general notion of justice. Every man hath an idea of equality and inequality of numbers. Every man knows at once to which of these two ideas some plain and simple numbers belong. Every body perceives at once a relation between the number three, and the idea of inequality: and every body perceives instantly a relation between the number two and the idea of equality. But should I propose a very complex number to the most expert arithmetician, and ask him to which of the two classes this number belongs, he would require some time to consider, before he could return his answer: not because he had not very clear ideas of equality and inequality, but because

he could not at first sight perceive whether the number S E R M.
proposed were equal or unequal. The arithmetician, VI.
whom I have supposed, must study to find out the
relation; as soon as he discovers it he will readily an-
swer, and tell me whether the number proposed be
equal or unequal.

Apply this example to the subject in hand. All
mankind, according to our reasoning, have a general
notion of a fitness, that ought to be between the con-
duct of an intelligent being and the circumstances in
which he is placed, and the relations that he bears to
other beings. Always when a man perceives that a
particular action hath such a fitness, or hath it not, he
will declare, without hesitation, that the action is just
or unjust. If he hesitate in some cases, it is because
he doth not perceive the relation of the action in ques-
tion to this fitness. It belongs to casuists to solve
difficulties of this kind. I perceive at once a relation
between him who receives a benefit, and him who
confers it, and from this relation I conclude that there
is a fitness between gratitude and the circumstances
of the receiver: therefore I declare, without hesitating,
that gratitude is a virtue, and that ingratitude is a vice.
But should I be asked whether it were a virtue or a
vice to kill a tyrant, I might hesitate: because I might
not at first perceive what relation there is between the
killing of a tyrant and the fitness that ought to subsist
between the conduct of a subject and his relation to
a tyrant.

Should any one still urge me to give him clearer
ideas of that which I call the *proportion*, the *harmony*,
or the *fitness* of an action, I would freely own that I
could not answer his enquiry. But, at the same time,
I would declare that my inability did not arise from
the obscurity of my subject, but from the all-sufficiency
of its evidence. I would recur to the maxim, just
now mentioned, that when a subject is placed in a
certain degree of evidence and simplicity, every thing

S E R M. that is added to elucidate, serves only to darken and
VI. to perplex it.

Should my enquirer still reply that he had no idea of that which I call the *proportion*, the *harmony*, or the *fitness* of an action, I should consider him as a being of a species different from mine, and I should not think of conversing with him. There are some common ideas, some maxims, that are taken for granted, even by the most opposite parties: and when those maxims are disputed, and those ideas not admitted, there is an end of conversing and reasoning.

This is a general notion of holiness. But the holiness, that is attributed to God, and prescribed to men, in the text, cannot belong in the same sense, and in every respect, to such different beings. We are going to examine then, in the second place, in what sense it agrees to God, and in what sense it agrees to man.

II. What hath been said of holiness in general, will serve to explain in what sense God is holy, and in what sense men ought to be holy. The general principle of holiness is common to God and man. The general principle of holiness, as hath been already shewn, is a perfect proportion, harmony, or fitness between the conduct of an intelligent being and his relations to other beings. The holiness of God is that perfect harmony, proportion, or fitness, that subsists between his conduct (if I may be allowed to speak thus of God) and his relations to other beings. The holiness of man consists in the same. But as the circumstances and relations of God differ from those of men, the holiness of God and the holiness of men are of different kinds. And it is the difference of these relations that we must distinguish, if we would give a proper answer to the questions in hand: In what sense, and in what respects is holiness ascribed to God? In what sense, and in what respects is holiness prescribed to men?

The first question, that is, What relations hath God with other beings, is a question so extensive, and so difficult

difficult, that all human intelligence united in one S E R M.
mind, could not return a sufficient answer. We have VI.
been accustomed to consider our earth as the principal
part of the universe, and ourselves as the most con-
siderable beings in nature. Yet our earth is only an
atom in the unbounded space, in which it is placed:
and we are only a very inconsiderable number in com-
parison of the infinite multitude and the endless variety
of creatures which the great Supreme hath made.
There is an infinite number of Angels, Seraphims,
Cherubims, thrones, dominions, powers, and other in-
telligences, of which we have no ideas, and for which
we have no names. God hath relations to all these
beings, and on the nature of those relations depends
the nature of that order, justice, or holiness, which he
inviolably maintains in respect to them. But let us not
lose ourselves in these immense objects. Let us only
fix our meditation on God's relations to men, and we
shall form sufficient ideas of his holiness.

What relation doth God bear to us? God hath
called us into existence: and there are between us the
relations of Creator and creature. But what harmony
do we think there ought to be between the conduct of
God to us, and the relation that he bears to us of a
Creator to creatures? Harmony, or fitness, seems to
require, that God, having brought creatures into ex-
istence, should provide for their support, and, having
given them certain faculties, should require an account
of the use that is made of them. This is the first idea
that we form of the holiness of God. It does not ap-
pear to us fit, or agreeable to order, that God, after
having created intelligent beings, should abandon them
to themselves, and not regard either their condition,
or their conduct. On this principle we ground the
doctrine of Providence, and reject the extravagant
system of the Epicureans.

What relation doth God bear to us? God hath
given us a revelation. He hath proposed some prin-
ciples

S E R M. ciples to us. Between God and us there are the re-
 VI. lations of tutor and pupil. But what fitness do we
 think there ought to be between the conduct of God
 and the relation of a tutor to a pupil, that subsists be-
 tween him and us? It is fit, methinks, that a reve-
 lation proceeding from God should be conformable
 to his own ideas; and on this principle we ground the
 doctrine of the truth, or, as the schools call it, the
veracity of God, and maintain with S. Paul, even in-
 dependently on the authority of S. Paul, that *it is*
impossible for God to lie.

Heb. vi.
 18.

What relation doth God bear to us? God hath
 made a covenant with us: to certain conditions in
 that covenant he hath annexed certain promises. Be-
 tween God and us there subsist the relations of two
 contracting parties. What fitness, do we think, there
 ought to be between the conduct of God and that re-
 lation of an allie, which he bears to us? We think
 that there is a harmony, or a fitness, in his fulfilling
 the articles of the covenant, and on this principle we
 ground our expectation of the accomplishment of his
 promises, and believe that *all the promises of God are*
yea, and amen.

2 Cor. i.
 20.

What relation subsists between God and us? God
 hath given us certain laws. Between God and us there
 are the relations of a law-giver and subjects. What
 harmony, do we think, there ought to be between
 the conduct of God and the relation of a legislator to
 a subject? We think, harmony requires that the laws
 prescribed to us should be proportional to our ability;
 that nothing should be required of us beyond our
 natural power, or the supernatural assistances that he
 affords: and on this principle we reject a cruel system
 of divinity, more likely to tarnish than to display the
 glory of the Supreme Being: on this principle we say
 with S. James, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of*
God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not:
 on this principle we say with S. Paul, that *as many as*
have

Jam. i.
 12.

have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: *S. R. M.*
and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by *v. v.*
the law. Follow this train of reasoning, my brethren, *Rom. ii.*

reflect on the other relations that God bears to man-^{12.}
kind, examine, as far as ye are capable of examining,
the harmony that subsists between the conduct of God
and those relations, and the farther ye proceed in me-
ditations of this kind, the more just, and the more en-
larged will be your ideas of the holiness of God. *would*

But perhaps some may accuse me of taking that for
granted which remains to be proved, and of grounding
my whole system of the holiness of God on a disputed
principle, the truth of which I have not yet demon-
strated: that is, that there doth subsist such a perfect
harmony or fitness between the conduct of God and
his relations to men. Perhaps I may be asked for the
proofs of this principle, the ground of my whole
system, for if the principle be doubtful the whole
system is hypothetical, and if it be false the system falls
of itself. I answer, my brethren, that we have as
strong and demonstrative evidence of the holiness of
God as it is possible for finite creatures to have of
the attributes of an infinite Being. We may derive
sound notions of the conduct of God from three
different sources, each of which will prove that a
perfect harmony subsists between the conduct of God
and his relations to us, and all together will fully con-
vince us that God possesseth in the most eminent degree
such a holiness as we have described. *is it to naturally*

1. We shall be fully convinced that God possesseth
this holiness if we regulate our ideas of his conduct by
our notion of his nature. Let me beg leave to remark,
to those who have been accustomed to argue, that I
do not mean here an imaginary notion of God, like
that which some divines and some philosophers have
laid down as the ground of their arguments. They
begin by supposing a perfect being: then they ex-
amine what agrees with a perfect being: and that they
attribute

S. A. R. M. attribute to God. This is their argument; *Holiness is an attribute of a perfect being: God is a perfect being: Therefore holiness is an attribute of God.* We do not at present use this method. I suppose myself suddenly placed in this world, surrounded with a variety of creatures. I do not suppose that there is a holy Supreme Being: but I enquire whether there be one; and in this manner I obtain a full demonstration. My knowledge of creatures produceth the notion of a creator. My notion of a creator is complex, and includes in it the ideas of a grand, infinite, almighty Being. But the notion of a Being, who is grand, infinite, and almighty, includes in it, I think, the idea of a holy Being. At least, I cannot perceive, in this Being, any of the principles, that tempt men to violate the laws of order. Men sometimes transgress the laws of order through ignorance: but the grand, the mighty, the infinite Being thoroughly understands the harmony, that ought to subsist between the laws of order and the most difficult and most complicated action. Men sometimes violate the laws of order because the solicitations of their senses prevail over the rational deliberations of their minds; but the great, the powerful, the infinite Being is not subject to a revolution of animal spirits, an irregular motion of blood, or an inundation of bodily humours. Men sometimes violate the laws of order because they are seduced by a present and sensible interest: But this principle of a violation of the laws of order can have no place in God. The great, the mighty, the infinite Being can have no interest in deceiving such contemptible creatures as we. If then we judge of the conduct of God by the idea that we are obliged to form of his nature, we shall be convinced of his perfect holiness.

2. We may be convinced of the holiness of God by the testimony that God his self hath given of his attributes. The testimony that God hath given of himself is the most credible testimony that we can obtain.

And

And how doth he represent himself in the holy scriptures? He describes himself every where as a holy Being, and as a pattern of holiness to us. He describes himself surrounded with happy spirits, who perpetually cry, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts.* S E R M. VI.

3. God will appear supremely holy to you if ye judge by his works. Behold the works of nature, they proclaim the perfect holiness of God. Consult that work of nature, your own heart: that heart, all corrupt as it is, yet retains some faint traces of the holiness of God, who created it; so that in spite of its natural depravity, it still does homage to virtue: it resembles a palace, which, having been at first built with magnificence and art, hath been miserably plundered and destroyed, but which yet retains, amidst all its ruins, some vestiges of its ancient grandeur. Behold society, that work of providence publisheth the supreme holiness of God. God hath so formed society that it is happy or miserable in the same proportion as it practiseth, or neglecteth, virtue. Above all, behold the work of religion. What say the precepts, the precedents, the penalties of religion? More especially, what saith the grand mystery of religion, that mystery which is the scope, the substance, the end of all the other mysteries of religion, I mean the mystery of the cross? Doth it not declare that God is supremely holy?

We have seen then in what respects holiness belongs to God, and, by pursuing the same principles, we may discover in what respects it belongs to men. Consider the circumstances, in which men are placed, and what relation they bear to other beings: Consider what harmony there ought to be between the conduct of men and their relations: and ye will form a just notion of the holiness that men are commanded to practise. There is the relation of a subject to his prince, and the subject's submission is the harmony of that relation: in this respect it is the holiness of a man to submit to his prince. There is the relation of a child to his

VOL. I. X parent,

S E R M. parent, and there is a harmony between the conduct
VI. and the relation of the child when he loves and obeys his parent: Love and obedience to the parent constitute the holiness of the child.

The principal relation of man is that which he bears to God. Man stands in the relation of a creature to God, who is his creator: and the conduct of a creature is in harmony with his relation when the will of his creator is the rule of his actions: The revealed will of God then must regulate the will of man. Order requires us to submit ourselves to him of whom we have received all that we enjoy: All our enjoyments come from God; from him we derive *life, motion, and existence*: It is impossible then to resist his will without violating the laws of order. Our future prospects, as well as our present enjoyments, proceed from God: our own interest demands then, that we should submit to his will, in order to a participation of future favours, which are the objects of our present hopes.

ACTS xvii.
28.

We have seen then in what respects holiness belongs to God, and in what respects it belongs to men. But although holiness does not belong, in the same sense, and in every respect, to beings so different as God and man, yet the holiness of God ought to be both a reason and a rule for the holiness of man. *Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.* This is our third part, and with this we shall conclude the discourse.

III. The holiness of God, we say, is both a rule and a reason for the holiness of man. The words of the text include both these ideas, and will bear either sense. They may be rendered, *Be ye holy as I am holy*: and, according to this translation, the holiness of God is a rule or a model of ours. Or, they may be rendered, *Ye shall be holy, because I am holy*: and, according to this, the holiness of God is a reason or a motive of our holiness. It is not necessary now to enquire which of these two interpretations is the best. Let us unite both. Let us make the holiness of God the pattern of

of our holiness : and let us also make it the motive S E R M.
of ours. VI.

1. Let us make the holiness of God the model of ours. *The holiness of God is complete in its parts.* He hath all virtues, or rather, he hath one virtue that includes all others : that is, the love of order. He is equally just in his laws, true in his language, his promises are faithful, and his thoughts are right. Let this holiness be our pattern, *Be ye holy as God is holy.* Let us not confine ourselves to one single virtue. Let us incorporate them all into our system. Let us have an assortment of christian graces. Let us be, if I may express myself so, complete christians. Let us add to our ^{2 Pet. 1. 5,} faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge ^{6, 7.} temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

2. The holiness of God is infinite in its degrees. Nothing can confine its activity. Let this be our model, as far as a finite creature can imitate an infinite Being. Let us not rest in a narrow sphere of virtue, but let us carry every virtue to its most eminent degree of attainment. Let us every day make some new progress. Let us reckon all that we have done nothing, while there remains any thing more to do. Let each of us say with S. Paul, *I count not myself to have* Phil. iii. *apprehended : but this one thing I do, forgetting those* ^{13.} *things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark.*

3. The holiness of God is pure in its motives. He fears nothing, he hopes for nothing; yet he is holy. He knows, he loves, he pursues holiness. This is the whole system of his morality. Let this be our pattern. We do not mean to exclude the grand motives of hope and fear, which religion hath sanctified, and which have such a mighty influence over beings capable of happiness or misery. But yet, let not our inclinations to virtue necessarily depend on a display of the

S E R M. horrors of hell, or the happiness of heaven. Disinterestedness of virtue is the character of true magnanimity, and christian heroism. Let us esteem it a pleasure to obey the laws of order. Let us account it a pleasure to be generous, beneficent, and communicative. Let us *lend*, agreeably to the maxim of Jesus Christ, *hoping for nothing again*; and, in imitation of his example, let us *lay down our lives for the brethren*.

Luke vi.

35.

John iii.

36.

Eph. iv.

24.

Pf. lxxiii.

3.

4. The holiness of God is *uniform in its action*. No appearance deceives him, no temptation shakes him, nothing dazzles or diverts him. Let this be our example. Let us not be every day changing our religion and morality. Let not our ideas depend on the motion of our animal spirits, the circulation of our blood, or the irregular course of the humours of our bodies. Let us not be *carried about with every wind of doctrine*. Let us not be christians at church only, on our solemn festivals alone, or at the approach of death. Let our conduct be uniform and firm, and let us say, with the prophet, even in our greatest trials, *Yet God is good to Israel*. However it be, I will endeavour to be as humble on the pinnacle of grandeur, as if Providence had placed me in the lowest and meanest post, I will be as moderate, when all the objects of my wishes are within my reach, as if I could not afford to procure them. I will be as ready to acquiesce in the supreme will of God, if he conduct me through various adversities, and through *the valley of the shadow of death*, as if he led me through prosperities, and filled me with delights. Thus the holiness of God must be the model of ours: *Be ye holy as I am holy*.

But the holiness of God must also be the reason or motive of ours; and we must be holy because God is holy: *Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy*.

We groan under the disorders of our nature, we lament the loss of that blessed but short state of innocence, in which the first man was created, and which

we

we wish to recover: *we must be holy then, for the Lord* S E R M.
our God is holy. The beauty and blessedness of man VI.
 in his primitive state consisted in his immediate
 creation by the hand of God, and in the bearing of his
 Creator's image, which was impressed, in a most lively
 manner, upon his mind. Sin hath defaced that image,
 and our happiness consists in its restoration: that
 is, in our being *renewed after the image of him who* Col. iii.
created us. 10.

We wish to enjoy the favour of God: we must be
holy then, because the Lord our God is holy. They are
our iniquities that have separated between us and our God: Isa. lix. 2.
 and it is holiness that must conciliate a communion,
 which our sins have interrupted.

We tremble to see all nature at war with us, and
 wish to be reconciled to all the exterior objects, that
 conspire to torment us; we must *be holy then, because*
the Lord our God is holy. Sin is a hateful object to a
holy God. Sin hath armed every creature against
 man. Sin hath thrown all nature into confusion.
 Sin, by disconcerting the mind, hath destroyed the
 body. It is sin that hath brought death into the
 world, and *death is the sting of sin.*

We wish to be reconciled to ourselves, and to possess
 that inward peace and tranquillity, without which no
 exterior objects can make us happy: we must *be holy*
then, because the Lord our God is holy. We have re-
 marked, in this discourse, that God, who is an inde-
 pendent being, loves virtue for its own sake, inde-
 pendently on the rewards that accompany and follow
 it. Nevertheless, it is very certain that the felicity
 of God is inseparable from his holiness. God is *the*
happy God, because he is *the holy God.* God, in the
 contemplation of his own excellencies, hath an inex-
 haustible source of felicity. Were it possible for God
 not to be supremely holy, it would be possible for God
 not to be supremely happy. Yes, God, all glorious
 and supreme as he is, would be miserable, if he were
 subject,

S E R M. subject, like unholy spirits, to the turbulent com-
 VI. motions of envy or hatred, treachery or deceit. From
 such passions would arise odious vapours, which would
 gather into thick clouds, and, by obscuring his glory,
 impair his felicity. Even heaven would afford but
 imperfect pleasure, if those infernal furies could there
 kindle their unhallowed flames. The same reasoning
 holds good on earth, for, it implies a contradiction,
 to affirm that we can be happy, while the operations
 of our minds clash with one another: and it is equally
 absurd, to suppose that the almighty God can ter-
 minate the fatal war, the tragical field of which is the
 human heart, without the re-establishing of the do-
 minion of holiness.

We desire to experience the most close and tender
 communion with God, next Lord's-day, in receiving
 the holy sacrament: let us *be holy* then, *because the Lord*
our God is holy. This august ceremony may be con-
 sidered in several points of view: and one of them
 deserves a peculiar attention. The table of the Lord's
 supper hath been compared, by some, to that which
 was formerly set, by the command of God, in the *holy*
place: I mean, the table of *shew bread*, or *bread of the*
presence. God commanded Moses to set twelve loaves
 upon the table, to change them every sabbath, and to
 give those that were taken away to the priests, who
 were to eat them in the *holy place*. What was the end
 of these ceremonial institutions? The tabernacle at
 first was considered as the tent, and the temple after-
 ward as the palace of the deity, who dwelt among the
 Israelites. In the palace of God it was natural to
 expect a table for the use of him and his attendants,
 This was one of the most glorious privileges that the
 Israelites enjoyed, and one of the most august symbols
 of the presence of God among them. God and all
 the people of Israel, in the persons of their ministers,
 were accounted to eat the same bread. The heathens,
 stricken with the beauty of these ideas, incorporated
 them

Ex. xxv.
30.

Lev. xxiv.
6, &c.

them into their theology. They adopted the thought, S E R M.
and set, in their temples, tables consecrated to their VI.
Gods. The prophet *Isaiah* reproacheth the Jews
with forsaking the Lord, forgetting his holy mountain,
and preparing a table for the host of heaven: And Isa. lxxv. 2.
Ezekiel reckons among the virtues of a just man, that
he had not eaten upon the mountains. It was upon Ez. xviii. 6.
tables of this kind, that idolaters sometimes ate the
remains of those victims, which they had sacrificed to
their gods. This they called *eating with gods*; and
Homer introduceth *Alcinous* saying, *The gods visit us,*
when we sacrifice becatombs, and sit down with us at the
same table.

This is one of the most beautiful notions, under
which we can consider the sacrament of the Lord's
supper. There we eat with God. God sitteth down
with us at the same table, and so causeth us to ex-
perience the meaning of this promise, *Behold, I stand* Rev. iii.
at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and 20.
open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with
him, and be with me. But what do such close con-
nections with a holy God require of us? They require
us to be holy. They cry to us, as the voice cried to
Moses from the midst of the burning bush, *Draw not* Ex. iii. 5.
nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place
whereon thou standest is holy ground.

God is supremely holy: God supremely loveth
order. Order requires you to leave vengeance to
God, to pardon your bitterest, and most professed
enemies; and, what is more difficult still, order re-
quires you to pardon your most subtle and secret foes.
Would ye approach the table of a holy God gnawn
with a spirit of animosity, hatred, or vengeance?

God is supremely holy: God supremely loveth
order. Order requires you to dedicate a part of those
blessings to charity, with which Providence hath in-
trusted you; to retrench the superfluities of your
tables,

S E R M. tables, in order to enable you to assist the starving and dying poor. Would ye approach the table of a *holy* God with hearts hardened with indifference to that poor man, whom God hath commanded you to love as yourselves?

God is supremely holy: God supremely loveth order. Order requires you to be affected with the tokens of divine love. All are displayed at the Lord's table. There the bloody history of your redeemer's sufferings is again exhibited to view. There the blood, that Christ the victim shed for your crimes, flows afresh. There God recounts all the mysteries of the cross. Would ye approach that table cold and languishing? Would ye approach that table without returning to Jesus Christ love for love, and tenderness for tenderness? Would ye approach that table void of every sentiment, and emotion, which the venerable symbols of the love of God must needs produce in every honest heart? Ah! my brethren, were ye to approach the table of Jesus Christ without these dispositions, ye would come, not like S. John, or S. Peter, but, like Judas. This would not be to receive an earnest of salvation, but to *eat and drink* your own *damnation*. This would not be to receive the body of Jesus Christ: this would be to surrender yourselves to Satan.

I can hardly allow myself to entertain such melancholy thoughts. Come to the table of Jesus Christ, and enter into a closer communion with a *holy* God. Come and devote yourselves entirely to the service of a *holy* God. Come and arrange the operations of your minds by the perfections of a *holy* God. Come and diminish the grief, that ye feel, because, in spite of all your endeavours to be *holy as God is holy*, ye are so far inferior to his glorious example. But, at the same time, come and receive fresh assurances, that ye are formed for a more perfect period of holiness. Come and

and receive the promises of God, who will assure you, **S E R M.**
that ye shall one day *see him as he is, and be like him.* **VI.**
May God grant us this blessing! To him be honour : **John iii.**
and glory for ever. Amen. **2.**

and receive the promises of God, who will allow you to
 have your share in the Kingdom of God, and to be like him.
 May God grant us this blessing! To him be honour and
 glory for ever. Amen.

The Kingdom of God is not a matter of outward
 things, but of inward things. It is a matter of the
 heart, and of the mind, and of the will. It is a matter
 of love, and of peace, and of joy. It is a matter of
 faith, and of hope, and of charity. It is a matter of
 obedience, and of submission, and of humility. It is a
 matter of purity, and of holiness, and of righteousness.
 It is a matter of truth, and of honesty, and of integrity.
 It is a matter of kindness, and of gentleness, and of
 patience. It is a matter of self-control, and of
 discipline, and of perseverance. It is a matter of
 courage, and of strength, and of power. It is a matter
 of wisdom, and of understanding, and of knowledge.
 It is a matter of grace, and of mercy, and of compassion.
 It is a matter of love, and of peace, and of joy.
 It is a matter of faith, and of hope, and of charity.
 It is a matter of obedience, and of submission, and of
 humility. It is a matter of purity, and of holiness, and
 of righteousness. It is a matter of truth, and of honesty,
 and of integrity. It is a matter of kindness, and of
 gentleness, and of patience. It is a matter of self-control,
 and of discipline, and of perseverance. It is a matter of
 courage, and of strength, and of power. It is a matter
 of wisdom, and of understanding, and of knowledge. It is
 a matter of grace, and of mercy, and of compassion. It is
 a matter of love, and of peace, and of joy.

S E R M O N VII.

The COMPASSION of G O D.

S E R M O N VII

The Commission of C. O. D.

S E R M O N VII.

The COMPASSION of GOD.

PSALM ciii. 13.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

AMONG many frivolous excuses, which mankind have invented to exculpate their barrenness under a gospel-ministry, there is one that deserves respect. Why, say they, do ye address men as if they were destitute of the sentiments of humanity? Why do ye treat christians like slaves? Why do ye perpetually urge, in your preaching, motives of wrath, vengeance, the *worm* that never dies, the *fire* that is never quenched? ^{Ifa. lxvi. 24.} Motives of this kind fill the heart with rebellion instead of conciliating it by love. Mankind have a fund of sensibility and tenderness. Let the tender motives, that our legislator hath diffused throughout our bibles, be pressed upon us; and then every sermon would produce some conversions, and your complaints of christians would cease with the causes that produce them.

I call this excuse frivolous: for how little must we know of human nature, to suppose men so very sensible to the attractives of religion! Where is the minister of the gospel, who hath not displayed the charms of religion a thousand, and a thousand times, and displayed them in vain? Some souls must be terrified,

S E R M. fied, some sinners must be *saved by fear, and pulled out of the fire.* There are some hearts that are sensible to
 VII. only one object in religion, that is, hell; and, if any
 Jude 23. way remain to prevent their actual destruction hereafter, it is to overwhelm their souls with the present fear of it: *knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.*

Yet, however frivolous this pretext may appear, there is a something in it that merits respect. I am pleased to see those men, who have not been ashamed to say that the Lord's yoke is intolerable, driven to abjure so odious a system: I love to hear them acknowledge, that religion is supported by motives fitted to ingenuous minds; and that the God, from whom it proceeds, hath discovered so much benevolence and love in the gift, that it is impossible not to be affected with it if we be capable of feeling.

I cannot tell, my brethren, whether, among these christians, whom the holiness of this day hath assembled in this sacred place, there be many, who have availed themselves of the frivolous pretence, just now mentioned; and who have sometimes wickedly determined to despise eternal torments, under an extravagant pretence that the ministers of the gospel too often preach, and too dismally describe them. But, without requiring your answer to so mortifying a question, without endeavouring to make you contradict yourselves, we invite you to behold those attractives to day, to which ye boast of being so very sensible. Come and see the Supreme Legislator, to whom we would devote your services; behold him, not as an avenging God, not as
 Job ix. 4. a consuming God, not *shaking the earth, and overturning*
 Psa. xviii. *the mountains* in his anger, not *thundering in the heavens,*
 13, 14. *shooting out lightnings, or giving his voice in hailstones and coals of fire:* but, putting on such tender emotions for you as ye feel for your children. In this light the prophet places him in the text, and in this light we are going to place him in this discourse.

O ye

O ye marble hearts ! so often insensible to the terrors SERM.
of our ministry ; may God compel you to day to feel VII,
its attracting promises ! O ye marble hearts ! against
which the edge of the sword of the Almighty's aveng-
ing justice hath been so often blunted ; the Lord grant
that ye may be this day dissolved by the energy of his
love ! Amen.

*Like as a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord
pity them that fear him.* Before we attempt to explain
the text, we must premise one remark, which is gene-
rally granted, when it is proposed in a vague manner,
and almost as generally denied in its consequences :
that is, that the most complete notion, which we can
form, of a divine attribute, is to suppose it in perfect
harmony with every other divine attribute.

The most lovely idea, that we can form of the
Deity, and which, at the same time, is the most solid
ground of our faith in his word, and of our confidence
in the performance of his promises, is that which re-
presents him as an uniform being, whose attributes
harmonize, and who is always consistent with himself.
There is no greater character of imperfection in any
intelligent being than the want of this harmony : when
one of his attributes opposeth another of his attributes ;
when the same attribute opposeth itself ; when his
wisdom is not supported by his power ; or when his
power is not directed by his wisdom.

This character of imperfection, essential to all crea-
tures, is the ground of those prohibitions, that we
meet with in the holy scriptures, in regard to the
objects of our trust. *Put not your trust in princes, nor* Psa. cxlvi.
in the son of man in whom there is no help. His breath 3, 4.
goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his
thoughts perish. Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, Jer. xvii.
and maketh flesh his arm. Why ? Because it is not safe 5.
to confide in man, unless he have such a harmony of
attributes, as we have just now described ; and because
no man hath such a harmony. His power may assist
you,

S E R M. you, but, unless he have wisdom to direct his power,
 VII. the very means that he would use to make you happy, would make you miserable. Even his power would not harmonize with itself, in regard to you, if it were sufficient to supply your wants to day, but not to morrow. That man, that prince, that mortal, to whom thou givest the superb titles of Potentate, Monarch, Arbiter of peace, and Arbiter of war; that mortal, who is alive to day, will die to morrow, the breath that animates him will evaporate, he will *return to his earth*, and all his kind regards for thee will vanish with him.

But the perfections of God are in perfect harmony. This truth shall guide us through this discourse, and shall arrange its parts: and this is the likeliest way, that we can think of, to preserve the dignity of our subject, to avoid its numerous difficulties, to preclude such fatal inferences as our weak and wicked passions have been too well accustomed to draw from the subject; and to verify the prophet's proposition in its noblest meaning, *Like as a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord pity them that fear him.*

Would ye form a just notion of the *goodness* of God, (for the original term, that our translators have rendered *pity*, is equivocal, and is used in this vague sense in the holy scriptures.) Would ye form a just notion of the goodness of God? Then, conceive a perfection that is always in harmony with

I. The spirituality of his essence.

II. The inconceivableness of his nature.

III. The holiness of his designs.

IV. The independence of his principles.

V. The immutability of his will.

VI. The efficiency of his power. But above all

VII. With the veracity of his word.

I. The goodness of God must agree with the *spirituality of his essence*. Compassion, among men, is that mechanical emotion, which is produced in them by the sight

sight of distressed objects. I allow that the wisdom of the Creator is very much displayed in uniting us together in such a manner. Ideas of fitness seldom make much impression on the bulk of mankind; it was necessary therefore to make sensibility supply the want of reflection, and, by a counter-blow, with which the miseries of a neighbour strike our feelings, to produce a disposition in us to relieve him. Nature produceth but few monsters, who regale themselves on the sufferings of the wretched. Here, or there, hath been a Phalaris, who hath delighted his ears with the shrieks of a fellow-creature burning in a brazen bull: And some, whose minds were filled with ideas of a religion more barbarous and inhuman than that of the Bacchanalians, have been pleased with tormenting those victims, which they sacrificed not to God, the father of mankind, but to him who is their murderer: But none, except people of these kinds, have been able to eradicate those emotions of pity, with which a wise and compassionate God had formed them.

But this sensibility degenerates into folly, when it is not supported by ideas of order, and when mechanical emotions prevail over the rational dictates of the mind. It is a weakness, it is not a love worthy of an intelligent being, that inclines a tender mother to pull back the arm of him, who is about to perform a violent, but a salutary operation on the child whom she loves. It is a weakness, it is not a love worthy of an intelligent being, that inclines a magistrate to pardon a criminal, whose preservation will be an injury to society, and the sparing of whose life will occasion a thousand tragical deaths.

This kind of weakness, that confounds a mechanical sensation with a rational and intelligent love, is the source of many of our misapprehensions about the manner in which God loves us, and in which, we imagine, he ought to love us. We cannot conceive the consistency of God's love in making us wise in a

S E R M. school of adversity, in exposing us to the vicissitudes
 VII. and misfortunes of life, and in frequently abandoning his children to pains and regrets. It seems strange to us, that he should not be affected at hearing the groans of the damned, whose torments can only be assuaged by uttering blasphemies against him. Renounce these puerile ideas, and entertain more just notions of the Supreme Being. He hath no body; he hath no organs, that can be shaken by the violence done to the organs of a malefactor; he hath no fibres, that can be stretched to form an unison with the fibres of your bodies, and which must be agitated by their motions. Love, in God, is in an intelligence, who sees what is, and who loves what may justly be accounted, lovely; who judgeth by the nature of things, and not by sensations, of which he is gloriously incapable: his love is in perfect harmony with the *spirituality of his essence.*

II. Our ideas of the goodness of God must agree with our notions of *the inconceivableness of his nature.* I oppose this reflection to the difficulties, that have always been urged against the goodness of God. There are two sorts of these objections; one tends to limit the goodness of God, the other to carry it beyond its just bounds.

If God be supremely good, say some, how is it conceivable that he should suffer sin to enter the world; and, with sin, all the evils that necessarily follow it? This is one difficulty which tends to carry the goodness of God beyond its just extent.

Is it conceivable, say others, that the great God, that God, who, according to the prophet, *weighed the*
 Isa. xl. 12. *mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance:* that God, who *measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span:* that God, who *sitteth*
 22. *upon the circle of the earth, and considereth the inhabitants thereof as grasshoppers:* is it conceivable, that he should have such a love for those mean insects as
 the

the gospel represents; a love that inclined him to give S E R M.
his own son, and to expose him to the most ignominious VII.
of all punishments, to save them? This is an objection
of the second class, which tends to limit the goodness
of God.

One answer may serve to obviate both these kinds
of objections. The love of God is in perfect harmony
with the inconceivableness of his nature. All his per-
fections are inconceivable, we can only follow them to
a certain point, beyond which it is impossible to dis-
cover their effects. *Canst thou by searching find out God?* Job xi. 7.

Canst thou by searching find out his eternity? Ex-
plain an eternal duration: teach us to comprehend an
extent of existence so great, that when we have added
age to age, one million of years to another million of
years, if I may venture to speak so, when we have
heaped ages upon ages, millions of ages upon mil-
lions of ages, we have not added one day, one hour,
one instant to the duration of God, with whom *a thou-
sand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years.*

Canst thou by searching find out his knowledge? Ex-
plain to us the wisdom of an intelligence, who com-
prehended plans of all possible worlds; who compared
them all together; who chose the best, not only in pre-
ference to the bad, but to the less good; who knew all
that could result from the various modifications of
matter, not only of the matter which composeth our
earth, but of the immense matter, that composeth all
bodies, which are either in motion or at rest in the im-
mensity of space, which lie beyond the reach of our
senses, or the stretch of our imaginations, and of which,
therefore, we can form no ideas. Explain to us the
wisdom of a God, who knew all that could result from
the various modifications of spirits, not only of those
human spirits, which have subsisted hitherto, or of
those which will subsist hereafter, in this world, but of
the thousands, of the *ten thousand times ten thousands*
that stand before him. Dan. vii.
10.

S E R M. Canst thou by searching find out his power?

VII. Explain to us that self efficient power, which commandeth a thing to be, and it is; which commandeth it not to be, and it ceaseth to exist.

The extent of God's mercy is no less impossible to find out than the extent of his other attributes. We are as incapable of determining concerning this, as concerning any of his other perfections, that it must needs extend hither, but not thither: that it ought to have prevented sin, but not to have given Jesus Christ to die for the salvation of sinners. Our notion of the goodness of God should agree with the inconceivableness of his nature, and, provided we have good proofs of what we believe, we ought not to stagger at the objections, which an insufficient, or rather, an insolent reason hath the audacity to oppose to it.

III. Our notion of the goodness of God should agree with *the holiness of his designs*. I mean, that it would imply a contradiction to suppose that a Being who is supremely holy, should have a close communion of love with unholy creatures, considered as unholy and unconverted. By this principle we exclude the dreadful consequences, that weakness and wickedness have been used to infer from the doctrine under our consideration. We oppose this principle to the execrable reasoning of those libertines, who say, (and, alas! how many people, who adopt this way of reasoning, mix with the saints, and pretend to be saints themselves!)

Rom. vi. *Let us continue in sin that grace may abound.* With the same principle the prophet guards the text, *Like as a father pitieth his children, so doth the Lord pity*, whom? Them, who establish their crimes on the mercy of God? God forbid! *So doth the Lord pity them that fear him.* This truth is so conformable to right reason, so often repeated in the holy scriptures, and so frequently enforced in this pulpit, that none but those who wilfully deceive themselves can mistake the matter: and for these reasons we dismiss this article.

IV. The

IV. The love of God is in perfect harmony with S E R M.
the independence of his principles. Interest is the spring VII.
that moves, and very often the defect that destroys,
human friendships. It must be allowed, however,
that though principles of interest may appear low and
mean, yet they often deserve pity more than blame. It
would be extremely difficult for a debtor, if he were
oppressed by a merciless creditor, to love any person
more than him, who should be both able and willing
to free him from the oppressor's iron rod. It would
be strange if a starving man were not to have a more
vehement love for him who should relieve his ne-
cessities, than for any one else. While our necessities
continue as pressing as they are in this valley of tears,
principles of interest will occupy the most of our
thoughts, and will direct the best of our friendships.
Disinterested love seems to be incompatible with the
state of indigent creatures.

But God forbid that we should entertain similar
notions of the deity! God is supremely happy. His
love to his creatures is supremely disinterested. In-
deed, what interest can he have in loving us? Were
this world, which hath existed but a little while, to
cease to exist; were all the beings upon earth, material
and immaterial, to return to their non-entity; were God
to remain alone, he would enjoy infinite happiness; in
possessing himself he would possess perfect felicity.
Every beast of the forest is his, and the cattle upon a thou- Pf. 1. 10.
sand hills: sacrificial flesh affords no nourishment to
him; clouds of fragrant incense communicate no
odours to him; he is not entertained with the har-
mony of the music that is performed in his honour;
for our goodness extendeth not to him. The praises of Pf. xvi. 2.
seraphims can no more augment the splendor of his
glory, than the blasphemies of the damned can di-
minish it.

V. The love of God to his creatures agrees with
the immutability of his will. There is but little reality,
and

S E R M. and less permanency, in human love. The names of
 VII, steadiness, constancy, and equanimity, an indelible
 image, an everlasting impression, a perpetual idea, an
 endless attachment, an eternal friendship, all these are
 only names, only empty, unmeaning sounds, when
 they are applied to those sentiments, which the most
 faithful friends entertain for each other.

I am not describing now those light and inconstant
 people only, who are as ready to break as to form con-
 nections: I am describing people of another, and a
 better, disposition of mind. We are ignorant of our-
 selves when we imagine ourselves capable of a per-
 manent attachment, and, when we think that we shall
 always love, because we are assured that we love at
 present, we are the first to deceive ourselves. This
 man, who only at certain times discovers sentiments of
 tenderness, is not a hypocrite. That woman was very
 sincere, when, weeping over a dying husband, and, in
 some sense, more agonizing than he, she just gathered
 strength enough to close the eyes of her departing all, and
 protested that she should never enjoy another moment,
 except that in which the great disposer of all events
 should appoint her to follow her beloved partner to
 the grave: the woman expressed what she then felt,
 and what, she thought, she should always feel: but,
 however, time brought forward new objects, and other
 scenes have calmed the violence of her passions, and
 have placed her in that state of tranquillity and sub-
 mission to the will of God, which all the maxims of
 religion had not the power of producing.

People are not always to be blamed for the slight-
 ness of their friendships. Our levity constitutes, in
 some sort, our felicity, and our imperfections apolo-
 gize for our inconstancy. Life would be one continued
 agony, if our friendships were always in the same
 degree of activity. *Rachel* would be infinitely mi-
 serable, if she were always thinking about *her children*,
 and would not be comforted because they are not. I only
 mean

mean to observe, that a character of levity is essential S E R M.
to the friendships of finite human minds. VII.

God alone is capable, (O thou adorable Being, who only canst have such noble sentiments, enable us to express them!) God only, my dear brethren, is capable of a love, real solid and permanent, free from diversion and without interruption. What delineations, what representations, what purposes, revolved in the infinite mind, before that appointed period, in which he had determined to express himself in exterior works, and to give existence to a multitude of creatures? Yet throughout all these countless ages, through all these unfathomable abysses of eternity, (I know no literal terms to express eternity) yet through all eternity he thought of us, my dear brethren; then he formed the plan of our salvation; then he appointed the victim that procured it; then he laid up for us the felicity and glory that we hope for ever to enjoy. What care and application are required to inspect, to order and arrange the numberless beings of the whole earth? The whole earth, did I say? The whole earth is only an inconsiderable point: but what care and application are required to inspect, to order and arrange, the worlds which we discover revolving over our heads, with other worlds, that we have a right to suppose, in the immensity of space? Yet this application doth not prevent his attention to thee, believer; thy health he guards, thy family he guides, thy fortune and thy salvation he governs, as if each were the only object of his care, and as if thou wert alone in the universe! What an immensity of happiness must fill the intelligence of God, who is his self the source of felicity; of a God, who is surrounded with angels, archangels, and happy spirits, serving him day and night, continually attending round his throne, and waiting to fly at a signal of his will; of a God, who directeth and disposeth all; of a God, who, existing with the word, and the holy spirit, enjoys in that union inconceivable and ineffable.

SERM. effable delights; and yet the enjoyment of his own

VII. happiness doth not at all divert his attention from the
 Acts ix. 4. happiness of his creatures! If a Saul persecute his
 Zech. ii. church, he is *persecuted* with it, and when profane
 hands touch his children, they *touch the apple of his eye*.
 Isa. lxiii. *In all our affliction he is afflicted: lo! he is with us always,*
 Matthew *even unto the end of the world.*
 xxviii. 20.

VI. The goodness of God must harmonize with the
efficiency of his will. The great defect of human friend-
 ships is their inefficacy. The unavailing emotions that
 men feel for each other, their ineffectual wishes for each
 other's happiness, we denominate friendship. But
 suppose an union of every heart in thy favour, sup-
 pose, though without a precedent, thyself the object of
 the love of all mankind, what benefit couldst thou de-
 rive from all this love in some circumstances of thy life?
 What relief from real evils? Ah! my friends, ye are
 eager to assist me in my dying agonies; Alas! my
 family, ye are distressed to death to see me die; ye
 love me, and, I know, the tears that bathe you flow
 from your hearts; yes, ye love me, but I must die!

None but the infinite God, my dear brethren, none
 Rom. viii. 31. but the adorable God hath an efficient love. *If God be
 for us, who can be against us?* Let the elements be
 let loose against my person and my life, let mankind,
 who differ about every thing else, agree to torment me,
 let there be a general conspiracy of nature and society
 against my happiness, what doth it signify to me? If
 God love me, I shall be happy: with God to love
 and to beatify is one and the same act of his self-
 efficient will.

VII. But, finally, the goodness of God must agree
 with *his veracity*. I mean, that although the many
 scripture-images of the goodness of God are imper-
 fect, and must not be literally understood, they must,
 however, have a real sense and meaning. Moreover,
 I affirm, that the grandeur of the original is not at all
 diminished, but, on the contrary, that our ideas of it
 are

are very much enlarged, by purifying and retrenching S E R M.
the images that represent it; and this we are obliged VII.
to do on account of the eminence of the divine per-
fections. And here, my brethren, I own, I am in-
volved in the most agreeable difficulty that can be
imagined, and my mind is absorbed in an innumerable
multitude of objects, each of which verifieth the
proposition in the text. I am obliged to pass by a
world of proofs and demonstrations. Yes, I pass by
the firmament with all its stars, the earth with all its
productions, the treasures of the sea and the influences
of the air, the symmetry of the body, the charms of
society, and many other objects, which, in the most
elegant and pathetic manner, preach the creator's good-
ness to us. Those grand objects, which have excited
the astonishment of philosophers, and filled the inspired
writers with wonder and praise, scarcely merit a mo-
ment's attention to day. I stop at the principal idea
of the prophet. We have before observed, that the
term, which is rendered *pity* in the text, is a vague word,
and is often put in scripture for the *goodness* of God in
general, however, we must acknowledge, that it most
properly signifies the disposition of a good parent, who
is inclined to shew mercy to his son, when he is become
sensible of his follies, and endeavours by new effusions
of love to re-establish the communion that his disobe-
dience had interrupted: this is certainly the principal
idea of the prophet.

Now who can doubt, my brethren, whether God
possess the reality of this image in the most noble, the
most rich, and the most eminent sense? Wouldst thou
be convinced, sinner, of the truth of the declaration in
the text? Wouldst thou know the extent of the mercy
of God to poor sinful men? Consider then, 1. The
victim that he hath substituted in their stead. 2. The
patience which he exerciseth towards them. 3. The
crimes that he pardons. 4. The familiar friendship to
which he invites them. And 5. The rewards that he
bestows

S E R M. bestows on them. Ah! ye tender fathers, ye mothers
 VII. who seem to be all love for your children, ye whose eyes, whose hearts, whose perpetual cares and affections are centered in them, yield, yield to the love of God for his children, and acknowledge that God only knows how to love!

Let us remark, 1. The sacrifice that God hath substituted in the sinner's stead. One of the liveliest and most emphatical expressions of the love of God, in my
 iii. 16. opinion, is that in the gospel of S. John. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son.* Weigh these words, my brethren, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son.* Metaphysical ideas begin to grow into disrepute, and I am not surprized at it. Mankind have such imperfect notions of substances, they know so little of the nature of spirits, particularly, they are so entirely at a loss in reasoning on the Infinite Spirit, that we need not be astonished if people retire from a speculative track in which the indiscretion of some hath made great mistakes.

Behold a sure system of metaphysics. Convinced of the imperfection of all my knowledge, but particularly of my discoveries of the being and perfections of God, I consult the sacred oracles, which God hath published, in order to obtain right notions of him. I immediately perceive that God, in speaking of himself, hath proportioned his language to the weakness of men, to whom he hath addressed his word. In this view, I meet with no difficulty in explaining those passages in which God saith, that he hath hands or feet, eyes or heart, that he goeth or cometh, ascendeth or descendeth, that he is in some cases pleased, and in others provoked.

Yet, methinks, it would be a strange abuse of this notion of scripture, not to understand some constant ideas literally; ideas which the scriptures give us of God, and on which the system of christianity partly rests.

I perceive, and I think very clearly, that the scriptures constantly speak of a being, a person, or, if I may speak

Speak so, a portion of the divine essence, which is called S E R M.
the Father, and another that is called the Son. VII.

I think, I perceive with equal evidence in the same book, that between these two persons, the Father and the Son, there is the closest and most intimate union that can be imagined. What love must there be between these two persons, who have the same perfections and the same ideas, the same purposes and the same plans? What love must subsist between two persons, whose union is not interrupted by any calamity without, by any passion within, or, to speak more fully still, by any imagination?

With equal clearness I perceive, that the man Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem, and was lain in a manger, was in the closest union with the word, that is, with the son of God; and that in virtue of this union the man Jesus is more beloved of God than all the other creatures of the universe.

No less clearly do I perceive in scripture, that the man Jesus, who is as closely united to the eternal word, as the word is to God, was delivered for me, a vile creature, to the most ignominious treatment, to sufferings the most painful, and the most shameful, that were ever inflicted on the meanest and basest of mankind.

And when I enquire the cause of this great mystery, when I ask, Why did the almighty God bestow so rich a present on me? Especially, when I apply to revelation for an explication of this mystery, which reason cannot fully explain, I can find no other cause than the *compassion* of God.

Let the schools take their way, let reason lose itself in speculations, yea, let faith find it difficult to submit to a doctrine, which hath always appeared with an awful solemnity to those who have thought and meditated on it; for my part, I abide by this clear and astonishing, but, at the same time, this kind and comfortable proposition, *God so loved the world, that he gave*

S E R M. *his only begotten son.* When people shew us Jesus Christ
 VII. in the garden, sweating *great drops* of blood; when they speak of his trial before Caiaphas and Pilate, in which he was interrogated, insulted and scourged; when they present him to our view upon mount Calvary, nailed to a cross, and bowing beneath the blows of heaven and earth; when they require the reason of these formidable and surprizing phenomena, we will answer, It is because God loved mankind; it is because *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son.*

2. The patience that God exerciseth towards sinners, is our second remark. Here, my brethren, I wish, that as many of you as are interested in this article would allow me to omit particulars, and would recollect the histories of your own lives.

My life, says one, is consumed in perpetual indolence. I am a stranger to the practice of private devotion, and, to speak the truth, I consider it only as a fancy. I attend public worship, only because I would conform to example and custom. I hear the sermons of the ministers of the gospel as amusive discourses, that treat of subjects in which I have no interest. I take no part in the prayers that are addressed to God in behalf of the sick or the poor, the church or the state.

I, saith a second, ever since I have been in the world, have cherished one of the most shameful and criminal passions; sometimes I have been shocked at its turpitude, and sometimes I have resolved to free myself from it: in some of my sicknesses, which, I thought, would have ended in death, I determined on a sincere conversion: sometimes a sermon, or a pious book, hath brought me to self-examination, which hath ended in a promise of reformation: sometimes the sight of the Lord's-supper, an institution properly adapted to display *the sinfulness of sin*, hath exhibited my sin in all its heinousness, and hath bound me by oath to sacrifice my unworthy passion to God. But my corruption hath
 been

been superior to all, and yet God hath borne with me SERM. VII
to this day.

A third must say, As for me, I have lived thirty or forty years in a country where the public profession of religion is prohibited, and I have passed all the time without a membership to any church, without ordinances, without public worship, and without the hope of a pastor to comfort me in my dying illness; I have seduced my family by my example; I have consented to the settlement of my children, and have suffered them to contract marriages without the blessing of heaven; my lukewarmness hath caused first their indifference, and last their apostacy, and will perhaps cause . . . and yet God hath borne with me to this day.

Why hath he borne with me? It is not a connivance at sin, for he hates and detests it. It is not ignorance, for he penetrates the inmost recesses of my soul, nor hath a single act, no, not a single act, of my rebellion, eluded the search of his all-piercing eye. It is not a want of power to punish a criminal, for he holds the thunders in his mighty hands, at his command hell opens, and the fallen angels wait only for his permission to seize their prey. Why then do I yet subsist? Why do I see the light of this day? Why are the doors of this church once more open to me? It is because he commiserates poor sinners. It is because he *pitieth me as a father pitieth his children*.

3. Let us remark the crimes which God pardoneth. There is no sin excepted, no, not one, in the list of those which God hath promised to forgive to true penitents. He pardoneth not only the sins of those, whom he hath not called into his visible church, who, not having been indulged with this kind of benefits, have not had it in their power to carry ingratitude to its height: but he pardoneth also crimes committed under such dispensations as seem to render sin least pardonable. He pardoneth sins committed under the
dispensation

S E R M. dispensation of the law, as he forgiveth those which are
 VII. committed under the dispensation of nature; and those
 that are committed under the dispensation of the gos-
 pel, as those which are committed under the law. He
 forgiveth, not only such sins as have been committed
 through ignorance, infirmity, and inadvertency, but
 such also as have been committed deliberately, and
 obstinately. He not only forgiveth the sins of a day, a
 week, or a month, but he forgiveth also the sins of a great
 number of years, those which have been formed into
 an inveterate habit, and have grown old with the
 sinner. *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as
 white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall
 be as wool.*

Isa. i. 18.

But what am I saying? It is not enough to say that
 God forgiveth sins, he unites himself to those who have
 committed them by the most tender and affectionate ties.

4. Our next article therefore regards the familiar
 friendship to which God invites us. What intimate,
 close, and affectionate relation canst thou imagine, which
 God is not willing to form with thee in religion? Art
 thou affected with the vigilance of a shepherd, who
 watcheth over, and sacrificeth all his care, and even
 his life, for his flock? This relation God will have
 with thee: *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth
 me beside the still waters.* Art thou affected with the
 confidence of a friend, who openeth his heart to
 his friend, and communicates to him his most secret
 thoughts, dividing with him all his pleasures and all
 his pains? God will have this relation with thee: *The
 secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, Shall I
 hide from Abraham that thing which I do? I call you not
 servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth:
 but I have called you friends; for all things that I have
 heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Art
 thou touched with the tenderness of a mother, whose
 highest earthly happiness is to suckle the son of her
 womb?

Psa. xxiii.
1, 2.Psa. xxv.
24.Gen. xviii.
17.John xv.
15.

womb? God will have this relation with thee: *Can* S E R M.
a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have VII.
compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, Isa. xlix.
yet will I not forget thee. 15.

Hast thou some good reasons for disgust with human connections? Are thy views so liberal and delicate as to afford thee a conviction that there is no such thing as real friendship among men? And that what are called connections, friendships, affections, unions, tenderesses, are generally no other than interchanges of deceit disguised under agreeable names? Are thy feelings so refined that thou sighest after connections formed on a nobler plan? God will have such connections with thee. Yes, there is, in the plan of religion, an union formed between God and us, on the plan of that which subsists between the three persons in the god-head, the object of our worship: that is, as far as a similar union between God and us can subsist without contradiction. God grants this to the intercession of his son, in virtue of that perfect obedience which he rendered to his father on the cross. This Jesus Christ requested for us, on the eve of that day, in which, by his ever-memorable sacrifice, he reconciled heaven and earth: *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou* John xvii.
hast given me, for they are thine. 9. *Neither pray I for these*
alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through
their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art 20.
in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. 21. Do
 not enquire the possibility of this union, how we can be
 one with God and with Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ
 and God are one. Our hearts, as defective in the
 power of feeling as our minds in that of reasoning,
 have no faculties, at present, for the knowledge of
 such things as can be known only by feeling. But
 the time will come when both sense and intelligence
 will be expanded, and then we shall know, by a happy
 experience, what it is to be one with God and with
 Jesus Christ.

This

SERM. This leads us to our 5. and last article, That is, the
 VII. felicity that God reserveth for his children in another world. A re-union of all the felicities of this present world would not be sufficient to express the love of God to us. Nature is too indigent: our faculties are too indigent: society is too indigent: religion itself is too indigent.

Nature is too indigent: it might indeed afford us a temperate air, an earth enamelled with flowers, trees laden with fruits, and climates rich with delights: but all its present beauties are inadequate to the love of God, and there must be another world, another œconomy, *new heavens and a new earth.*

Isa. lxxv.
 17.

Our faculties are too indigent; they might indeed admit abundant pleasures, for we are capable of knowing, and God could gratify our desire of knowledge. We are capable of agreeable sensations, and God is able to give us objects proportional to our sensations; and so of the rest. But all these gratifications would be too little to express the love of God to us. Our faculties must be renewed, and, in some sense, new cast; for *this corruptible body must put on incorruption; this natural body must become a spiritual body;* so that by means of more delicate organs we may enjoy more exquisite pleasures. Our souls must be united to glorified bodies, by laws different from those which now unite us to matter, in order to capacitate us for more extensive knowledge.

1 Cor. xv.
 53.
 44.

Society is too indigent, although society might become an ocean of pleasure to us. There are men whose friendships are full of charms; their conversations are edifying and their acquaintance delightful; and God is able to place us among such amiable characters in this world: but society hath nothing great enough to express the love of God to us. We must be introduced to the society of glorified saints, and to thousands of angels and happy spirits, who are capable

capable of more magnanimity and delicacy than all S E R M.
that we can imagine here. VII.

Religion itself is too indigent, although it might open to us a source of delight. What pleasure hath religion afforded us on those happy days of our lives, in which, having fled from the crowd, and suspended our love to the world, we meditated on the grand truths which God hath revealed to us in his word; when we ascended to God by fervent prayer; or renewed at the Lord's table our communion with him! How often have holy men been enraptured in these exercises! How often have they exclaimed during these foretastes, *Our souls are satisfied as with marrow and fatness! O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! We are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: we drink of the river of thy pleasures!* Yet even religion can afford nothing here below that can sufficiently express the love of God to us. We must be admitted into that state, in which there is neither *temple* nor *sun*, because God supplieth the place of both. We are to behold God, not surrounded with such a handful of people as this, but with *thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand*, who stand continually before him. We must see God, not in the displays of his grace in our churches, but in all the magnificence of his glory in heaven. We are to prostrate ourselves before him, not at the Lord's table, where he is made known to us in the symbols of bread and wine: (august symbols indeed: but too gross to exhibit the grandeurs of God) but we are to behold him upon his throne of glory, worshipped by all the happy host of heaven. What cause produceth those noble effects? From what source do those *rivers of pleasure* flow? It is love which *lays up* all this goodness for us: *I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love.* Psa. lxxiii. xxxi. 19. xxxvi. 8. Rev. xxi. 22, 23. Dan. vii. 10. Ps. xxxiv. 8. Ps. xxxi. 19. Hos. xi. 4.

Let us meditate on the love of God, who, being supremely happy his self, communicateth perfect hap-

S E R M. piness to us. Supreme happiness doth not make God
 VII. forget us; shall the miserable comforts of this life
 make us forget him? Our attachments to this life
 are so strong, the acquaintances that we have contracted
 in this world so many, and the relations that we bear
 so tender; we are, in a word, so habituated to live, that
 we need not wonder if it cost us a good deal to be
 willing to die. But this attachment to life, which,
 when it proceeds only to a certain degree, is a sinless
 infirmity, becomes one of the most criminal disposi-
 tions when it exceeds its just limits. It is not right
 that the objects of divine love should lose sight of their
 chief good, in a world where, after their best endea-
 vours, there will be too many obstacles between them
 and God. It is not right that rational creatures, who
 have heard of the pure, extensive, and munificent
 love of God to them, should be destitute of the most
 ardent desires of a closer union to him; than any that can
 be attained in this life. One single moment's delay
 should give us pain, and if we wish to live it should be
 only to prepare to die. We ought to desire life only
 to mortify sin, to practise and to perfect virtue, to avail
 ourselves of opportunities of knowing ourselves better,
 and of obtaining stronger assurances of our salvation.
 No, I can never persuade myself that a man, who is wise
 in the truths of which we have been discoursing, a man,
 Rom. v. 5. in whom *the love of God hath been shed abroad by the holy
 Ghost given unto him*, a man, who thinks himself an
 object of the love of the great Supreme, and who
 knows that the great Supreme will not render him
 perfectly happy in this life, but in the next, can afford
 much time for the amusements of this. I can never
 persuade myself that a man, who hath such elevated
 notions, and such magnificent prospects, can make a
 very serious affair of having a great name in this world,
 of lodging in a palace, or of descending from an il-
 lustrious ancestry. These little passions, if we con-
 sider them in themselves, may seem almost indifferent,
 and

and I grant, if ye will, that they are not always attended S E R M.
with very bad consequences, that, in some cases, they VII.
injure nobody, and, in many, cause no trouble in so-
ciety: but, if we consider the principle from which
they proceed, they will appear very mortifying to us.
We shall find that the zeal and fervour, the impatient
breathings of some, *to depart, and to be with Christ*: the Phil. i. 23.
aspiring of a soul after the chief good; the prayer,
Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; the eager wish, *When* Rev. xxii.
shall I come and appear before God? We shall find that ^{20.} Ps. xlii. 2.
these dispositions, which some of us treat as enthu-
siasms, and which others of us refer to saints of the
first order, to whose perfections we have not the pre-
sumption to aspire; we shall find, I say, that these
dispositions are more essential to christianity than we
may have hitherto imagined.

May God make us truly sensible to that noble
and tender love which God hath for us! May God
kindle our love at the fire of his own! May God
enable us to know religion by such pleasures as they
experience who make love to God the foundation of all
virtue! These are our petitions to God for you: to
these may each of us say Amen!

S E R M O N VIII.

The Incomprehensibility of the Mercy
of G O D.

VOL. I.

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S E R M O N VIII.

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ISAIAH lv. 8, 9.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

LO, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him! This is one of the most sententious sayings of Job, and it expresseth, in a very lively and emphatical manner, the works of God. Such language would produce but very little effect indeed in the mouth of a careless unthinking man: but Job, who uttered it, had a mind filled with the noblest ideas of the perfections of God. He had studied them in his prosperity, in order to enable him to render homage to God, from whom alone his prosperity came. His heart was conversant with them under his distressing adversities, and of them he had learnt to bow to the hand of him, who was no less the author of adversity than of prosperity, of darkness than of day. All this appears by the fine description which the holy man gives immediately before: *God, saith he, stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds;*
and

Job xxvi.
14.

S E R M. *and the cloud is not rent under them. He hath compassed the waters with bounds. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud. By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens.* But are these the only productions of the Creator? Have these emanations wholly exhausted his power? No, replieth Job, *These are only parts of his ways, and how little a portion is heard of him!*

My brethren, what this holy man said of the wonders of nature, we, with much more reason, say to you of the wonders of grace. Collect all that pagan philosophers have taught you of the goodness of the Supreme Being. To the opinions of philosophers join the declarations of the prophets. To the declarations of the prophets, and to the opinions of philosophers, add the discoveries of the evangelists and apostles. Compose one body of doctrine of all that various authors have written on this comfortable subject. To the whole join your own experience; your ideas to their ideas, your meditations to their meditations, and then believe that ye are only floating on the surface of the goodness of God, that his love hath dimensions, a *breadth and length, and depth, and height*, which the human mind can never attain: and, upon the brink of this ocean, say, *Lo, these are only parts of his ways, and how little a portion is heard of him!*

Eph. iii.
18.

This incomprehensibility of the goodness of God, (and what attention, what sensibility, what gratitude have we not a right to expect of you?) this inconceivableness of the goodness of God we intend to discuss to day. The prophet, or rather, God his self, saith to us by the prophet, *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Three things are necessary to explain the text.

I. The meaning must be restrained.

II. The

II. The object must be determined.

III. The proofs must be produced. And this is the whole plan of my discourse.

I. The words of my text must be restrained. Strictly speaking, it cannot be said, that God's *thoughts are not our thoughts*, and that his *ways are not our ways*: on the contrary, it is certain, that, in many respects, God's *ways are our ways, and his thoughts our thoughts*. I mean, that there are many cases, in which we may assure ourselves that God thinks so and so, and will observe such or such a conduct. The doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God is one of those doctrines which we ought to defend with the greatest zeal, because it hath a mighty influence in religion and morality: but it would become a subversion of both, were it to be carried beyond its just bounds. Libertines have made fewer proselytes by denying the existence of God than by abusing the doctrine of his inconceivableness. It makes but little impression on a rational man, to be told, that matter is eternal; that it arranged itself in its present order; that chance spread the firmament, formed the heavenly orbs, fixed the earth on its basis, and wrought all the wonders in the material world. It makes but little impression on a rational man, to be informed, that the intelligent world is to be attributed to the same cause to which libertines attribute the material world; that chance formed spirit as well as matter, gave it the power, not only of reflecting on its own essence, but also of going out of itself, of transporting itself into the past ages of eternity, of rising into the heavens by its meditation, of pervading the earth, and investigating its darkest recesses. All these extravagant propositions refute themselves, and hardly find one partisan in such an enlightened age as this, in which we have the happiness to live.

There are other means more likely to subvert the faith. To give grand ideas of the Supreme Being;

S E R M. to plunge, if I may be allowed to say so, the little
 VIII. mind of man into the ocean of the divine perfections ;
 to contrast the supreme grandeur of the Creator with
 the insignificance of the creature ; to persuade man-
 kind that the great Supreme is too lofty to concern
 himself with us, that our conduct is entirely indifferent
 to him ; that it signifies nothing to him whether we
 be just or unjust, humane or cruel, happy or miserable :
 To say in these senses, that *God's ways are not our ways*,
 that *his thoughts are not our thoughts*, these are the arms
 that infidelity hath sometimes employed with success,
 and against the attacks of which we would guard you.
 For these reasons, I said, that the meaning of the text
 must be restrained, or that it would totally subvert
 religion and morality.

We have seldom met with a proposition more ex-
 travagant than that of a certain bishop,* who, having
 spent his life in defending the gospel, endeavoured at
 his death to subvert it. This man, in a book entituled
The imperfection of the human mind, and which is itself
 an example of the utmost degree of the extravagance of
 the human mind, maintains this proposition, and makes
 it the ground of all his scepticism : that before we
 affirm any thing of a subject we must perfectly under-
 stand it. From hence he concludes, that we can affirm
 nothing of any subject, because we do not perfectly
 understand any. And from hence it naturally fol-
 lows, that of the Supreme Being we have the least
 pretence to affirm any thing, because we have a less
 perfect knowledge of him than of any other subject.
 What absurd reasoning ! It is needless to refute it here,
 and

* Peter Daniel Huet, bishop of Avranches, a countryman of our
 author's. He was a man of uncommon learning, and, in justice to
 christianity, as well as to his lordship, it ought to be remembered, that
 he wrote his *demonstratio evangelica* in the vigour of his life : but his
traite philosophique de la foiblesse de l'esprit humaine, of which Mons. Saurin
 complains, was written more than forty years after, when he was
 ninety years of age, and was superannuated. Father Castell, the Je-
 suit, denies that it was written by Huet at all.

and it shall suffice at present to observe, in general, S E R M.
that ignorance of one part of a subject doth not hinder VIII.
the knowing of other parts of it, nor ought it to hinder
our affirmation of what we do know. I do not perfectly
understand the nature of light; however I do know that it
differs from darkness, and that it is the medium by which
objects become visible to me. And the same may be affirmed
of other subjects.

In like manner, the exercise of my reasoning powers
produceth in me some incontestible notions of God, and,
from these notions, immediately follow some sure consequences,
which become the immoveable bases of my faith in his word,
of my submission to his will, and of my confidence in his
promises. These notions, and these consequences, compose the
body of natural religion. There is a self-existent Being. The
existence of all creatures is derived from the self-existent
Being, and he is the only source of all their perfections.
That Being, who is the source of the perfections of all other
beings, is more powerful than the most powerful monarchs,
because the most powerful monarchs derive only a finite power
from him. He is wiser than the most consummate politicians,
because the most consummate politicians derive only a finite
wisdom from him. His knowledge exceeds that of the most
knowing philosophers, or of the most transcendent geniusses,
because the most transcendent geniusses and the most knowing
philosophers derive only a finite knowledge from him. And the
same may be said of others. There are then some incontestible
notions, which reason gives us of God.

From these notions follow some sure and necessary
consequences. If all creatures derive their being and preservation
from him, I owe to him all that I am, and all that I have,
he is the sole object of my desires and hopes, and I am
necessarily engaged to be grateful for his favours, and entirely
submissive to his will. If creature-perfections be only emanations
from him, the

S E R M. source of all perfections, I ought to have nobler sentiments of his perfections, than of those of creatures, how elevated soever the latter may be. I ought to fear him more than I ought to fear the mightiest king, because the power of the mightiest king is only an emanation of his. I ought to commit myself to his direction, and to trust more to his wisdom than to that of the wisest politician, because the prudence of the wisest politician is only an emanation of his : and so of the rest. Let it be granted, that God is, in many respects, quite incomprehensible, that we can attain only a small degree of knowledge of this infinite object, or, to use the words of our text, that *his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways*: yet it will not follow, that the notions, which reason gives us of him, are less just, or, that the consequences, which immediately follow these notions, are less sure ; or, that all the objections, which libertines and sceptics pretend to derive from the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God, against natural religion, do not evaporate and disappear.

If reason affords us some adequate notions of God, if some necessary consequences follow these notions, for a much stronger reason, we may derive some adequate notions of God, and some sure consequences, from revelation. It is a very extravagant and sophistical way of reasoning, to alledge the darkness of revelation upon this subject, in order to obscure the light that it doth afford us. These words, *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways*, do not mean, then, that we can know nothing of the divine essence ; that we cannot certainly discover in what cases he will approve of our conduct, and in what cases he will condemn it : they only mean, that finite minds cannot form compleat ideas of God, know the whole sphere of his attributes, or certainly foresee all the effects that they can produce. Thus we have endeavoured to restrain the words of the text.

II. We are to determine their object. The prophet's expressions would have been true, had they been applied to all the attributes of God: however, they are applied here only to one of them, that is, to his goodness. The connection of the text with the preceding verses proves this. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* The text immediately follows: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.* It is clear, I think, that the last words, *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways*, directly relate to the preceding clause, *the Lord will have mercy upon him, and our God will abundantly pardon.* Wherein do the thoughts of God differ from ours? In this sense they differ: In God there are treasures of mercy, the depth of which no finite mind can fathom. In him goodness is as inconceivable as all his other attributes. In God, a sinner, who seems to have carried his sin to its utmost extravagance, and to have exhausted all the treasures of divine grace, shall still find, if he *return unto the Lord, and cast himself at the foot of him, who abundantly pardoneth*, a goodness, a compassion, a love, that he could not have imagined to find.

When we speak of the goodness of God, we mean, not only that perfection, which inclines him to communicate natural benefits to all creatures, and which hath occasioned the inspired writers to say, that *All creatures wait upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season; that he left not himself without witness in doing good.* But we mean, in a more especial manner, the grace of the gospel, of which the prophet speaks in the beginning of the chapter; *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money,*

SERM. money, and without price. Incline your ear, and come unto

VIII. me: hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an

Verse 3. everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of

4. David. Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Who is

this leader, whom God gave to be a witness to the people, that is, to manifest his attributes to the Gentiles?

What is this everlasting covenant? What are these

sure mercies of David? Two sorts of authors deserve

to be heard on this article, though on different ac-

counts, the first for their ignorance and prejudice, the

last for their knowledge and impartiality. The first

are the Jews, who, in spite of their obstinate blindness,

cannot help owning that these words promise the

advent of the Messiah. Rabbi David Kimchi gives

this exposition of the words: *the sure mercies of David,*

that is *the Messiah, whom Ezekiel calls David, They shall*

Ezek.

xxxvii. 25.

dwell in the land that I have given them, they, and their

children, and their children's children for ever; and my

servant David shall be their prince for ever. I purposely

pass by many similar passages of other Jewish Rabbies.

The other authors, whom we ought to hear for their

impartial knowledge, are the inspired writers, and par-

ticularly S. Paul, whose comment on this passage,

which he gave at Antioch in Pisidia, determines its

meaning. There, the apostle, having attested the truth

of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, affirms that the

prophets had foretold that event; and, among other

passages, which he alledged in proof of what he had

AA. xiii.

34.

advanced, quotes this, *I will give you the sure mercies of*

David. From all which it follows, that the object of

our text is the goodness of God, and, in an especial

manner, the love that he hath manifested unto us in

the gospel: and this is what we undertook to prove.

Such views of the grandeurs of God are sublime

and delightful. The divine perfections are the most

sublime objects of meditation. It is glorious to sur-

mount the little circle of objects that surrounds us, to

revolve

revolve in a contemplation of God, in whose infinite S E R M.
 perfections intelligent beings will for ever find matter VIII.
 sufficient to employ all their intelligence. Behold the
 inspired writers, they were fond of losing their capa-
 cities in this lovely prospect. Sometimes they stood
 on the borders of the eternity of God, and, viewing
 that boundless ocean, exclaimed, *Before the mountains* Psa. xc. 1.
were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and
the world: even from everlasting to everlasting thou art
God. A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday 4.
when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Sometimes
 they meditated on his power, and, contemplating the
 number and variety of its works, exclaimed, O Lord, Psa. viii. 1.
our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who
hast set thy glory above the heavens. When we consider 3.
thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the
stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou 4.
art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest
him? Sometimes their attention was fixed on the
 immensity of God, and, contemplating it, they
 exclaimed, *Whither shall we go from thy spirit? or* cxxxix. 7.
whither shall we flee from thy presence? If we ascend up 8.
into heaven thou art there, if we make our bed in hell, behold
thou art there: If we take the wings of the morning, and 9.
dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy 10.
hand lead us, and thy right hand shall hold us. But,
 however agreeable these objects of meditation may be,
 there is something mortifying and distressing in them.
 The more we discover the grandeur of the Supreme Be-
 ing, the greater distance we perceive between ourselves
 and him. We perceive him indeed: but it is as an in-
 habitant of light which no man can approach unto; and 1 Tim. vi.
 from all our efforts to know him we derive this re- 16.
 flection of the prophet, *Such knowledge is too wonderful* Psa. cxxxix.
for me: it is high; I cannot attain unto it. 6.

But the meditation of the goodness of God is as full
 of consolation as it is of sublimity. This ocean of
 the deity is an ocean of love. These dimensions, that
 surpass

S E R M. surpass your knowledge, are dimensions of love. These
 VIII. distances, a part only of which are visible to you, are depths of mercy, and those words, which God hath addressed to you, *my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways*, are equal to these: As far as heaven is above the earth; or, more fully, as far as ye finite creatures are inferior to me the infinite God, so far are your ideas of my compassion and love to you inferior to my pity and esteem for you: Try: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let not the multitude, or the enormity, of his crimes, terrify him into a despair of obtaining the pardon of them: Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Having thus determined the object, and restrained the meaning of the text, we shall proceed to adduce the proofs.

III. The prophet addresseth himself to two sorts of people; first, to the heathens, who knew no more of the goodness of God than what they had discovered by the glimmering light of nature: next, to some Jews, or to some christians, who, indeed, knew it by the light of revelation, but who had not so high a notion of it as to believe it sufficient to pardon all their sins. To both he saith on the part of God; *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. My thoughts are not your thoughts*, ye Gentile philosophers. Ye know my goodness only by your speculations on the nature of the Supreme Being: but all that ye discover, in this way, is nothing in comparison of what the Messiah will teach you in the gospel. *My thoughts are not your thoughts*, ye timorous consciences, ye gloomy and melancholy minds. Behold, I yet open to you treasures of mercy, which, ye
 thought

thought, ye had exhausted: *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* S E R M. VIII.

First. The prophet addresseth heathens, who had no other knowledge of God than a few speculations on the nature of the First Being; and who were never able to discover three mysteries of divine love.

1. The mean by which God conciliated his justice with his love.

2. His patience with those who abuse this mean.

3. His intimate union with those who fall in with the design of his patience.

1. The first mystery of love, which the wisest pagan philosophers could never discover, is the mean that God hath chosen to conciliate his justice with his love.

Let us carefully avoid the forming of mean notions of God; let us not imagine that the attributes of God clash: No, God is perfectly consistent with himself, and his attributes mutually support each other. When we say that the love of God resisted his justice, we mean that, according to our way of thinking, there were some inconveniences in determining the fate of mankind after the entrance of sin. In effect, what must become of this race of rebels? Shall God execute that sentence on them, which he hath pronounced against sin? But chains of darkness, a lake burning with fire and brimstone, weeping and wailing through an endless eternity, excite the compassion of a merciful God: Shall he then allow these unworthy creatures to live under his protection? Shall so many idle words, so many criminal thoughts, so many iniquitous actions, so much blasphemy, so many extortions, the shedding of so much innocent blood, shall all these go unpunished? But, were these allowed, his love of order and his veracity would be blemished. These are difficulties which all the universe could not solve. This is the book, of which S. John speaks in his revelation,

S E R M. the book sealed with seven seals; I wept much, saith S.
 VIII. John, because no man was found worthy to open and to
 v. 4. 9. read the book: but worthy is the lamb to take the book,
 and to open the seals.

From the depth of divine mercy proceeds a plan for the solution of all these difficulties. The son of God cloaths himself with mortal flesh. He saith, from his
 Heb. x. 6. infancy, *In sacrifices for sin thou hast no pleasure!* No,
 Micah vi. 6, 7. neither burnt-offerings, nor thousands of rams; neither altars overflowing with blood, nor ten thousands of rivers of oil; neither the first born for the transgression, nor all the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul: no, none of these is an offering worthy of being presented to thy justice:
 Heb. x. 7. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God: Lo, I come to do that will, which requires the punishment of sin and the salvation of the sinner. Lo, I come to be led *as a lamb to the slaughter*, and to be *dumb as a sheep before her shearers*. Lo, I am coming to suffer the very men for whose salvation I come to treat me as a malefactor; yea, moreover, I am coming to suffer the hidings of that adorable face, which hath always hitherto afforded me a *fulness of joy*; I am coming to suffer a suspension of that love, which is all my delight, and to cry under excessive sorrows, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* We must necessarily sink under the weight of this subject, my brethren, and we must be content to see only *parts of the ways* of love. We must determine only to take a slight survey of *the breadth and length, and depth and height of the love of God*, we must own that it *passeth knowledge*, and that these are things which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man*. We must confess that if we were not able to give this general answer to the objections, that are made against the mysteries of religion, that is, that the attributes of God are infinite, and that it doth not belong to such finite minds as ours to limit the infinite God, we should be overwhelmed with the difficulties, to which the marvels of redemption are liable

liable to be exposed. Let us rejoice in the prospect of S E R M.
that happy period, in which our faculties will be ex- VIII.
panded, and in which we shall make a more rapid
progress in the study of the love of God. In the
present period of infirmities let us be content with the
solution in our text ; *My thoughts are not your thoughts,*
neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as
the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways
higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2. But, in what manner have these miserable sinners,
(and this will explain the second mystery of love,
which reason could never have discovered) in what
manner have these miserable sinners, whom the justice
of God condemns to eternal torments, received the
declaration of their pardon? With what eyes have
they considered the miracle of an incarnate God? How
have they regarded that altar, on which such a noble
victim was sacrificed for their salvation? Have their
eyes been fountains of tears, to lament the crimes, that
brought down such a deluge of punishments upon
the head of the redeemer of mankind? Have they
received the redeemer with such tenderness and gra-
titude as the wonders of his love required? No: The
unbelieving synagogue, the Jews, or, to pass the Jews,
Christians, we, my brethren, who profess to believe the
mystery of the cross; we, who every day say, *We believe*
in Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary, who
was crucified, dead, and buried, we can hear of those great
mysteries with indifference; we can persist in the very
sins, that brought our redeemer to the cross; we can
refuse to give up a few inches of earth, a small sum of
money, the playing of an idle game, or the gratifying
of an absurd passion, to him who sacrificed for us his
person and his life; we can *do despite unto the spirit of* Heb. x.
grace, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. 29.

God is witness of all these things; God holds the thun-
ders in his mighty hands; wars and plagues, and fa-
mines and earthquakes, wait only for the first signal

S E R M. of his will to avenge those numerous indignities: yet
 VIII. God, who beholds those indignities, bears with them. This man, saith the love of God, is precipitated by the heat and vigour of youth, perhaps he may reflect when he arrives at the tranquillity of mature age; he shall be spared then till he arrives at maturity: or, perhaps he may recollect himself in the coolness of old age, he shall be spared then till the grave coolness of old age comes. That man hath been a rebel in his health, perhaps he may submit when he is sick, he shall be spared till sickness comes; and he shall be sought, exhorted, PF. lxxxii. conjured; I will say to him, *O that thou hadst hearkned*
 13. Jer. vi. 8. *unto me! Be thou instructed, lest my soul depart from thee!*
 Mat. xxiii. *O thou who killest the prophets, and stonest them which are*
 37. *sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not!* And it is the great God, who speaks in this manner to his ungrateful creature, who is insensible to such tender language!

3. The third mystery of love, which the wisest philosophers could never have discovered, is the union that God forms with man in religion. What tender relation canst thou imagine, which God hath not determined to form with thee in religion? Art thou sensible to the vigilance of a shepherd? *The Lord is thy shepherd, thou shalt not want.* Art thou sensible to the confidence of a friend? *I call thee not a servant, but a friend?* Art thou sensible to the tenderness of a parent? *Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon thee, that thou shouldst be called a son of God!* I should alledge many other images, of the love of God to believers, if I could flatter myself, that the imaginations of my hearers would be as pure as those of the sacred authors who have described them.

Art thou disgusted with human connections? Are thine ideas of friendship so refined that they render thee superior to human unions, and make thee wish for a friendship formed on a nobler plan? God hath determined

terminated that thou shalt be united to him as Jesus S E R M.
 Christ and he are united: an union at present incon- VIII.
 ceivable, but which we shall happily experience in the John xvii.
 enlarged sphere of an immortal life. Let us acknow- 20, 21.
 ledge then, that all the penetration of the wisest phi-
 losophers could never have discovered the extent of
 the love of God in the dispensation of the gospel. *My
 thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my
 ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than
 the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my
 thoughts than your thoughts.*

Secondly, Let us address the text to the gloomy
 mind of a melancholy person, who, having failed in
 the courage necessary to resist temptations, fails again
 in that which is necessary to bear the thought of having
 fallen into them. But, before we oppose or describe
 this weakness, let us grant that there is something in
 it which deserves respect. The greatest part of those,
 who treat it as an extravagance, seem to me far more
 extravagant than those who fall into it. Yes, the
 utmost excess of grief, that can be occasioned by the
 remembrance of sin, seems to me incomparably less
 blameable than the excessive tranquility of some
 other people's minds. Who, (think ye?) is most ex-
 travagant, he who is too much affected with the enor-
 mity of his sins, or he who is not affected enough?
 Is it he who, notwithstanding his sorrows and regrets,
 dare not venture to believe himself an object of divine
 compassion; or he who, having no contrition, nor
 shedding any tears of repentance, presumes on that com-
 passion? Is it he, whom the bare probability of being
 punished for his sins, of being eternally laden with
chains of darkness, of being an eternal prey to *the worm* 2 Pet. ii.
that never dieth, and of becoming fuel for that *fire* 4th Mark ix.
which shall never be quenched, depriveth of his rest, of 44, 45.
 a relish for the sweets of society, and of all inclination
 to enjoy the most insinuating pleasures; or, is it he
 who, in spite of so many reasons to fear his dangerous
 state,

S E R M. state, eats, drinks, diverts himself, runs from company
VIII. to company, from circle to circle, and employs the
moments, that are given him to avoid his miseries, in
inventing the most effectual means of forgetting them?
I repeat it again, a melancholy, that is occasioned by
the remembrance of sin, hath something respectable
in it, and the greatest part of those, who treat it alto-
gether as an absurdity, are more absurd than those
who fall into it.

I intend, however, in this part of my discourse, to
oppose this melancholy gloom. And thanks be to
those divine mercies, the grandeurs of which I am this
day commending, for furnishing me with so many
means of opposing this disposition, independently on
the words of my text. What a multitude of reflections
present themselves beside those which arise from the
subject in hand!

What madness possesseth thy melancholy mind?

Isa. i. 18. The holy spirit assures thee, that *though thy sins be as scarlet he will make them as white as snow; that though they be red like crimson he will make them as white as wool:* and dost thou think that thy sins are too aggravated to be pardoned in this manner?

The holy spirit gives thee a long list of the most execrable names in nature; a list of idolaters, murderers, extortioners, adulterers, persecutors, highway robbers, and blasphemers, who obtained mercy when they desired and sought it: and art thou obstinately bent on excluding thyself from the number of those sinners, to whom mercy is promised; and, because thou dost not believe it attainable, dost thou obstinately refuse to ask for it?

Isa. xi. 12. The holy spirit hath lifted up *an ensign for the nations;* or, to speak without a figure, the holy Ghost hath lifted up a cross, and on that cross a redeemer, who is able to
Heb. vii. *save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him;* and
25.
Mat. xi. who his self saith to all sinners, *Come unto me, all ye*
28, 29. *that labour, and are heavy laden, I will give you rest, and*

ye shall find rest unto your souls : And dost thou flee from S E R M. VIII. this cross, and rather choose to sink under the weight of thy sins than to disburden them on a redeemer, who is willing to bear them ?

But, passing all these, let us return to the text. *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* This is sufficient to refute, this is enough to subvert, and to destroy, the whole system of a despairing mind. The perfections of God are infinite : By what rule then dost thou pretend to Pf. lxxviii. 41. limit the holy one of Israel ? Canst thou by searching find Job xi. 7. out God ? Canst thou find out the eternity of him, 2 Pet. iii. 2. with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years ? Canst thou find out the extent of his wisdom ; a wisdom that first invented, then created, that governs now, and will for ever govern, both the material and intelligent worlds ? Behold, *his understanding is infinite!* Canst thou find out the power Pf. cxlvii. 5. of him, who weighed the mountains in scales, and the Isa. xl. 12. hills in a balance ; who taketh up the isles as a very little 15. thing ?

The mercy of God is no less inconceivable than the rest of his attributes. The nature of the thing proves it ; reason declares it ; revelation places it in the clearest light ; experience confirms it ; and of his mercy God saith in the text, *My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

Your thoughts have formed a gloomy system, and ye think that God can pardon a first, or a second, or perhaps a third sin, but ye cannot believe that he can forgive the hundredth, or even the fortieth offence : But God's thoughts are, that he can abundantly pardon ; that he can forgive the hundredth offence, yea the thousandth and the ten thousandth, as well as the first and

S E R M. and the second, if ye be sincerely willing to renounce
VIII. them, and seriously endeavour to reform them.

Ye think, agreeably to your gloomy system, that God doth indeed pardon some crimes, but that there are some which he will not pardon; that he sometimes pardoneth hatred, but that he will never forgive murder; that he sometimes pardoneth sins of infirmity, but that he will never forgive sins of obstinacy; that he pardoneth idle words, but that he will never forgive blasphemies: But God's thoughts are that he will *abundantly pardon*; that he will pardon murder as well as hatred; and sins of obstinacy as well as sins of infirmity; provided ye be sincerely willing to renounce them, and seriously endeavour to reform them.

Ye think, consistently with your melancholy system, that God may perhaps pardon the sins of a few days, or of a few months, or of a few years; but that he cannot forgive the sins of ten, or twenty years, or of a whole life: But God thinks that he can *abundantly pardon*; that he can forgive the sins of ten years, or of twenty, or of a whole life, as well as the sins of one day, or of one month, or of one year; if ye be sincerely willing to renounce them, and seriously endeavour to reform them.

Your thoughts are that God pardoneth the sins of those whom he hath not called into church-fellowship, nor distinguished by particular favours: But the thoughts of God are that he will *abundantly pardon*; that he will forgive sins committed under the mosaical dispensation as well as those that have been committed under the dispensation of nature, those that have been committed under the gospel as well as those that have been committed under the law, or before the law; if ye be sincerely willing to renounce, and seriously endeavour to reform them. It is not I, it is the prophet, it is God his self, by the prophet, who attests these truths: *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked FORSAKE HIS WAY,*

WAY, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let *S E R M.*
him RETURN UNTO THE LORD, and he will have *VIII.*
mercy upon him; and to our God, for HE WILL ABUN-
DANTLY PARDON. For my thoughts are not your
thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the
Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts
than your thoughts.

If ye sincerely forsake, and seriously reform them.
Have ye not been surprized at the frequent repetition
of this clause? This clause, however, is the ground of
all the promises, that we make to you on God's part.
The chief design of the prophet is to produce obedience
to God, and in this we would wish to unite this whole
assembly. Deprive the text of this clause, and the
rest of the words are not only false and unwarrantable,
but contradictory to themselves, and injurious to that
God, whose mercy we have been publishing. We
have no consolation for a melancholly man, who is re-
solved to persist in his sins. We have no remedy
against despair, when the despairing man refuseth to
renounce those crimes, the remembrance of which
causeth all his distress and despair.

Ye slanderers, ye false accusers, ye pests of society;
God will abundantly pardon you. Yea, though ye have
been wickedly industrious to poison the purest words,
the most harmless actions, the holiest intentions, yet ye
ought not to despair of the mercy of God; for his thoughts
are not as your thoughts, nor his ways as your ways. He
will forgive all your sins, if ye sincerely forsake, and
seriously reform them; if ye do justice to the innocence
that ye have attacked, and repair the reputation that
ye have damaged.

Ye unjust, ye oppressors, ye extortioners, ye who, as
well as your ancestors, have lived on the substance of the
wretched, and who are about to transmit an accursed
patrimony to your posterity, God will abundantly pardon
you: yea, though ye have made a sale of justice, ne-

S E R M. *g*ociated the blood of the miserable, betrayed the state;
 .VIII. and sold your country, yet ye ought not to despair of the mercy of God, for *his thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are his ways your ways.* All these sins he will forgive, if ye endeavour seriously to amend them; if ye lay aside those equipages, and retrench those sumptuous festivals, which are the fruits of your own, and of your parents, oppressions and extortions.

Ye sick, ye dying people, who cannot think of your momentary life without thinking of those sins, which ye have been perpetually committing, and in the multitude and magnitude of which your thoughts are lost, *God will abundantly pardon you.* Though no other time remains to conciliate your souls to God than the last days of a dying illness, the slight remains of a departing life, yet ye ought not to despair of the mercy of God, for *his thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are his ways as your ways.* He will forgive all your sins, if ye sincerely forsake, and seriously reform them; if ye be animated not only with the fear of death and hell, but with a sincere desire of *returning unto the Lord*; if ye do not make your pastor an accomplice in your sins; if ye do not forbid him the mentioning of some of your sins; if ye do not prevent the removal of that veil, which yet hides a great part of your turpitude from you; in a word, if ye willingly fall in with all the ways of repentance and reparation, that may be opened to you.

I conclude with the clause, that I have so often repeated, and which I repeat again, (and wo be to him who forgets it! wo be to him who, by his perseverance in sin, rendereth his compliance impossible!) if ye sincerely forsake, and seriously endeavour to reform and repair them. I give you a subject to meditate for the conclusion of this discourse, (a very terrible and alarming conclusion for those who have the madness

Jude. 4. *to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness,*) this subject, which

which I leave with you to meditate, is, what degree **SERM.**
of punishment in hell will be inflicted upon such men **VIII.**
as despise the mercy that we have been describing?
God grant that ye may never be able to answer this
by your own experience! Amen.

E c 2

S E R-

S E R M O N IX.
The SEVERITY of G O D.

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S E R M O N IX.

The SEVERITY of GOD.

HEBREWS xii. 29.

For our God is a consuming fire.

IT is a very deplorable thing, that your preachers can never expatiate on the goodness of God, without having just grounds to fear that ye infer dangerous consequences from their doctrine. That goodness, of which God hath made such tender declarations; that goodness, of which he hath given us such astonishing proofs; that goodness, which seems so proper to make us love him above all things; that goodness, through our abuse of it, contributes the most, to rivet our infidelity, and to increase our misery. We freely acknowledge, therefore, that with fear and trembling we endeavoured last Lord's day to display its greatness, and, though all our portraits were infinitely beneath the original, though we esteemed it then our happiness, and our glory, not to be able to reach our subject, yet we have been afraid of having said too much. When, to prevent the fatal effects of despair, we assured you, that, though ye had trafficked with the blood of the oppressed, or betrayed the state, or sold your country, yet ye might derive from the ocean of divine mercy a pardon for all these crimes, provided ye were enabled sincerely to repent, and thoroughly to reform them; when we said these things, we revolved in our minds
these

S E R M. these discouraging thoughts: Perhaps some of our
 1X. hearers may poison our doctrine: Perhaps some monster, of which nature produceth an example in every age, actually saith to himself; I may then, without despairing of my salvation, traffick with the blood of the oppressed, betray the state, sell my country, and, having spent my life in these wicked practices, turn to God on my death-bed. Ye will allow, we hope, that the bare probability of our having occasioned so dangerous a wound ought to engage us to attempt to heal it, by contrasting to day the goodness of God with his severity.

The text, that we have chosen, is the language of S. Paul, *Our God is a consuming fire*; and, it is worthy of observation, that we have scrupulously imitated the apostle's example in making this subject immediately succeed that which we explained last Lord's day. The gospel of last Lord's day was a passage in Isaiah,
 Isa. lv. 7. *God will abundantly pardon, for his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are our ways his ways: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways and his thoughts than our thoughts.* The gospel of this day is, *Our God is a consuming fire.* S. Paul hath made a similar arrangement, and him we have imitated. In the verses which precede our text he hath described, in a very magnificent manner, the goodness of God in the dispensation of the gospel. He hath exalted the condition of a christian, not only above that of the heathens, who knew the mercy of God only by natural reason, but even above that of the Jews, who knew it by revelation, but from whom it was partly hidden under veils of severity and rigour. Ye are not come, said he, unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard, intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living
 God,

18, &c.

God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. But what consequences hath the apostle drawn from all these truths? Are they consequences of security and indifference, such as some christians draw from them, such as some of you, it may be, drew from the prophet's doctrine last Lord's day? No; they are consequences of vigilance and fear: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: For our God is a consuming fire.

S E R M.

IX.

25:

Our God is a consuming fire. These words are metaphorical; they include even a double metaphor. God is here represented under the emblem of fire, agreeably to what the psalmist saith, *Shall thy wrath burn like fire?* There is no difficulty in this first metaphor. But the second, which representeth the conduct of God towards impenitent sinners as *wrath, vengeance, anger*, is very difficult, and requires a particular explication. In order to which we will attempt three things.

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46.

I. We will endeavour to harmonize our text with other parallel passages, and to give you distinct ideas of that which is called in God *wrath, anger, vengeance*, and which occasioned our apostle to say *God is a consuming fire*.

II. We will prove that this attribute agrees to God in the sense that we shall have given.

III. We will endeavour to reconcile the doctrine that we preach to day with that which we preached last Lord's day; the justice of God with his goodness; and by this mean to engage you to love and adore God as much when he threateneth as when he promiseth, as much when he presents his justice as when he

S E R M. displays his mercy. This is the whole plan of this
IX. discourse.

I. We will endeavour to give you distinct notions of that which the scripture calls the *wrath*, the *anger*, the *vengeance* of God.

Recollect a remark, which we have often made, that is, that when the scripture speaks of the perfections and operations of God it borroweth images from the affections and actions of men. Things that cannot be known to us by themselves can be understood only by analogy, as it is called, that is, by the resemblance which they bear to other things, with which we are better acquainted. Divine things are of this kind.

From this remark follows a precaution, which is necessary for the avoiding of error whenever we meet with an emblem of this kind descriptive of God in the holy scriptures; that is, that we must carefully lay aside every part of the emblem, that agreeth only to men from whom it is borrowed, and apply only that part to the deity which is compatible with the eminence of his perfections.

Sometimes the part that ought to be laid aside is so obvious that it is impossible to mistake it. For example. When the scripture attributeth to God hands, or feet, sorrow, or tears, or jealousy, it is very easy, methinks, to separate from emblems of this sort all that can only agree with the natures of frail, or with the conditions of sinful men.

But sometimes it is not quite so easy. The difficulty may proceed from several causes, of all which I shall mention but one at present, and to that I intreat your attention. Some men have false notions of grandeur, and none are more likely to entertain such notions than those divines, who have breathed only the air of the study, and trodden only the dust of the schools. Such divines, having never sweetned their manners by a social intercourse with rational people

in

in the world, have often contracted in that way of life S E R M.
a four morose disposition, and their tempers have tinged IX.
their ideas of grandeur and glory. I am greatly inclined to believe that some ideas, which several schoolmen have formed of the liberty and independence of God, have arisen from this disposition. Divines, who had sweetened their manners by associating with rational people in the world, would have attributed to God a noble and magnanimous use of his liberty and independence. They would have said, God is free and independent, then he will always do justly and equitably; then he will require of mankind only that which bears a proportion to the talents that he hath given them; then misery will be the consequence of nothing but vice, and felicity will always follow virtue. If the scriptures sometimes represent God by emblems, which seem opposite to these notions, sensible men would have considered that one part of them ought to have been cautiously separated from the other, because it was incompatible with the eminence of the perfections of God. But these scholastic divines have attributed to God such a conduct as their own savage tempers would have observed, had they been vested with divine power. To each of them the prophet's reproach may be very properly applied, *These things hast thou done, and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.* Psa. l. 21. They said, God is free, therefore he may appoint men, who have done neither good nor evil, to eternal flames. God is free, therefore he may create men on purpose that they may sin, and that he may display his wrath in their punishment.

II. Here let us stop, and let us keep to the subject in hand, by observing that those emblems of wrath and vengeance, under which God is represented to us, have one part that cannot be attributed to him, because it is not compatible with the eminence of his perfections, and another, that must be applied to him because it is.

S E R M. 1. It is a consequence of the frailty or of the depravity of men, that their *anger* inclines them to hate those whom they ought to love, and in whose happiness they ought to interest themselves, as far as they can without violating the laws of equity. Such a hatred cannot be attributed to God; he loves all his intelligent creatures, and, when we are told that *the Lord hateth a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood*; when he is represented as refusing some real blessings to mankind, as *hardening their hearts*, as *sending them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie*, all these descriptions mean that he dislikes sin, and all those who commit it; that it is not always consistent with the eminence of his perfections to work miracles for their conversion; and that it is not fit to reform by a physical power, which would destroy the nature of vice and virtue, men who refuse to be reformed by a moral power, which is suited to intelligent beings.

2. It is a consequence of human frailty or depravity, that men's *wrath* makes them taste a barbarous pleasure in tormenting those who are the objects of it, and in feasting, as it were, on their miseries. This is incompatible with the eminence of the perfections of God. When he saith, to impenitent sinners, *I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh*; when he saith, *Ab, I will ease me of mine adversaries*; when Moses saith to the Jews, *It shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought*; all the meaning of passages of this kind is, that the wisdom of God approveth the judgments that his justice inflicts; that the punishments of sinners cannot affect his happiness; and that when he hath not been glorified in their conversion, he will be glorified in their destruction.

3. It is a consequence of the frailty or of the depravity of men, that their *anger* disorders their bodies, and impairs their minds. See, the eyes sparkle, the mouth

mouth foams, the animal spirits are in a flame; these S E R M. obscure the faculties of the mind, and prevent the IX. weighing of those reasons that plead for the guilty offender; anger prejudgeth him, and, in spite of many powerful pleas in his favour, his ruin is resolved. All these are incompatible with the eminence of the perfections of God. *God is a spirit*; he is not subject to revolutions of sense; reasons of punishing a sinner never divert his attention from motives of pardoning the man, or of moderating his pain. When, therefore, God is represented as *shaking the earth, and moving the foundations of the hills, because he is wroth*; when we read, that *there went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth*; when he, who is called the word of God, is described as treading the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of almighty God; we understand no more than that God knoweth how to proportion the punishment to the sin, and that he will inflict the most rigorous penalties on the most atrocious crimes.

4. It is a consequence of the frailty and depravity of men, that their *anger* makes them usurp a right which belongs to God. An individual, who avengeth himself, assumes the place of that God who hath said *vengeance is mine*; at least, he assumes the place of the magistrate, to whom God hath committed the sword for the preventing of those disorders, which would subvert society, if each were judge in his own cause. This is incompatible with the eminence of the divine perfections. God useth his own right when he punisheth sin, agreeably to the doctrine of S. Paul, *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord*. What is this *wrath*, to which we are required to give place? It is the anger of God. *Avenge not yourselves, but give place unto wrath*; that is, be not hasty in revenging injuries, your self-love may magnify them, and the punishment which ye inflict may exceed the offence; leave vengeance to God, who knoweth

John iv.
24.
Psa. xviii.
7, 8.

Rev. xix.
13, 15.

Rom. xii.
19.

S E R M. knoweth how to weigh the injuries that ye have received in an impartial scale, and to inflict such punishments on the guilty as their crimes deserve.

IX.

5. It is a consequence of the frailty and depravity of men, that time doth not abate their resentment, and that the only reason, which prevents the rendering of evil for evil, is a want of opportunity; as soon as an opportunity offers they eagerly embrace it. This is incompatible with the eminence of the perfections of God; he hath at all times the means of punishing the guilty. When we are told, therefore, that he *sets our iniquities before him, our secret sins in the light of his countenance*; when, having reprieved the Israelites at the request of Moses, he told him, *in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them*; we only understand, that time never removes an idea from his mind; and that if a sinner do not improve the time, which is granted to him for his repentance, he will be punished when that period expires.

Pf. xc. 8.

Ex. xxxij.

34.

6. In fine, it is a consequence of the frailty and depravity of men, that their *anger* puts them upon considering and punishing a pardonable frailty as an atrocious crime. This is incompatible with the eminence of the divine perfections. If we imagine that God acts so, in any cases, it is because we have false notions of sins, and think that a pardonable frailty which is an atrocious crime. Sometimes, an action, that appears tolerable to us, is an atrocious crime, on account of the motive from which it proceeds. Such was that of Hezekiah; he shewed his treasures to the Babylonian ambassadors, and although this may seem very pardonable yet it was an atrocious crime, which appears by the following passage, *Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.* An action, that may appear to us very tolerable, is sometimes a heinous crime, on account of the singularity of the favour which

2 Chron.

xxxij. 25.

which preceded it. Such was the conduct of Lot's S E R M. wife; she looked back toward Sodom, which, although I X. it may seem very pardonable was yet a heinous crime, because she disobeyed the express command of her benefactor, who had just delivered her from the destruction of Sodom; and therefore she was instantly petrified. An action, that may seem very tolerable to us, is sometimes a very atrocious crime, on account of the little temptation which the offender had to commit it. Such was the action of that man who gathered Num. xv. sticks upon the sabbath-day; and although this may seem 32. very tolerable to us yet it was a heinous offence, because it was very easy to abstain from it, and therefore he was stoned. An action, that may seem very pardonable to us, may be a heinous crime, on account of the dignity of the offender. Such was that of Nadab and Abihu; they offered strange fire to the Lord, and although it may appear very pardonable to us yet it was an atrocious crime, for Nadab and Abihu were Lev. x. 1, 2. ministers of holy things, and they ought to have given examples of exact and scrupulous obedience, accordingly they were consumed with fire from heaven.

Thus we have gone through our first article, and have endeavoured to give you distinct ideas of that which the scripture calls in God, *wrath, anger, consuming fire.*

Moreover, in explaining the meaning of the proposition in the text, we have collected several passages, and alledged several examples, which prove the truth under our consideration. The explication of this proposition, *our God is a consuming fire*, proves its truth in the sense in which we have explained it. We leave the enlargement of this article to your meditation, then, and proceed to the next.

III. We are to conciliate what the scripture saith of the goodness of God with what it saith of his anger or vengeance; the gospel of last Lord's day with the gospel of this day: and, as the two subjects never appear

S E R M. appear more irreconcilable than when, having used
 IX. all our endeavours to terrify people who defer their conversion till a dying-illness, we actually take pains to comfort those who have deferred it till that time, we will endeavour to harmonize the goodness and justice of God in that particular point of view.

First, Let us endeavour, in a general view, to reconcile the goodness of God with his justice, by laying down a few principles.

1. To speak properly, there are not several perfections in God; but there is one single excellence, inclusive of every other, that ariseth from all his perfections, but of which it is not possible that we can either form any complete ideas, or easily express by any name: in general, it may be called order, or love of order. Order, in regard to finite and dependent beings, is that disposition, which induceth them to act agreeably to their relations to other intelligent beings; to the faculties which the Creator hath given them; to the talents that they have received; and to the circumstances in which they are placed. Order, in regard to God, who is an infinite and an independent intelligence, is that disposition, which induceth him always to act agreeably to the eminence of his perfections.

2. Although God hath only a general excellence, yet it is necessary for us to divide it into several particular excellencies, in order to the obtaining of some knowledge of an object, the immensity of which will not allow us to comprehend it at once. We are obliged to use this method in studying finite objects, whenever their sphere extends beyond the comprehension of a single act of the mind: And, if finite objects can be known only by this method, for a much stronger reason we must be allowed to use the same method of obtaining the knowledge of the great and infinite Being.

3. The general excellence of God being thus divided SERM.
into parts, each part becomes what we call a per- IX.
fection, or an attribute, of God, as vengeance or
justice, and goodness: but each particular attribute
will be still mistaken unless we subdivide it again into
other, and still more contracted, spheres. Thus, when
God sendeth rain and fruitful seasons, we call the
blessing simply *bounty*. When he delivereth us out
of our afflictions, we call it *compassion*. When he par-
doneth our sins, we call it *mercy*. But as all these par-
ticular excellencies proceed from that general attribute
which we call *goodness*, so that attribute itself pro-
ceedeth, as well as his justice, from an excellence more
general still, which we have denominated order, or love
of order.

4. Perfections, that proceed from the same per-
fection, or rather, which are the same perfection ap-
plied to different subjects, cannot be contrary to each
other. Strictly speaking, God is no more just than
good, no more good than just. His goodness is re-
strained by his justice, his justice by his goodness.
He delighteth as much in the exercise of his justice,
when order requires it, as in the exercise of his good-
ness, when order requires him to exercise it: or, to
express the same thing more plainly, that which is
goodness, when it is applied to one case, would cease
to be goodness, were it applied to a different case, be-
cause, in the latter, goodness would not be restrained by
justice: or, to express myself more plainly still, be-
cause order, which alloweth the exercise of goodness
in the first case, doth not allow the exercise of it in the
last, so that what would be fit, or agreeable to order, in
the first case, would be unfit or disorderly in the last.

To conclude. God is as amiable and adorable
when he exerciseth his justice, as when he exerciseth
his goodness. That which makes me adore God, be-
lieve his word, hope in his promises, and love him
above all things, is the eminence of his perfections.
Were not God possessed of such an eminence of per-

S E R M. fections, he would not be a proper object of adoration. I should be in danger of being deceived were I to believe his word, or to trust his promise, and I should be guilty of idolatry, were I to love him with that supreme affection, which is due to none but the Supreme Being. But, the goodness and justice of God being equal emanations of the eminence of his perfections, and of his love of order, I ought equally to adore and love him when he rewardeth, and when he punisheth, when he exerciseth his justice, and when he exerciseth his goodness; because, in either case, he alike displayeth that general excellence, that love of order, which is the ground of my love and obedience. I ought to adore and love him, as much when he drowns the world, as when he promiseth to drown it no more; when he unlocketh the gates of hell, as when he openeth the doors of heaven; when he saith to the impenitent, *Depart, ye cursed, to the devil and his angels*, as when he saith to his elect, *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*.

Mat. xxv.

41.

34.

The justice and the goodness of God, then, are in perfect harmony; the gospel of last Lord's-day, and the gospel of this day, entirely agree; the prophet and the apostle preach the same doctrine, and the two texts rightly understood, *God is a consuming fire*; *the Lord will abundantly pardon*; both these texts, I say, present the same object to us, the eminence of the divine perfections, God's love of order. This is what we proposed to prove.

Let us now apply this general harmony of the goodness and severity of God, to the removing of a seeming inconsistency in the conduct of your preachers and casuists, who first use every effort to alarm and terrify your minds with the idea of a death-bed repentance, and afterward take equal pains to comfort you, when ye have deferred your repentance to that time, and when your case appears desperate.

Why

Why do we not despair of a man who delays his conversion till the approach of death? Why did we tell you last Lord's-day, that God pardoneth not only the sins of months and years, but of a whole life? Because that order, which constitutes the eminence of the divine perfections, doth not allow that a sincere conversion, a conversion that reforms the sin, and renews the sinner, should be rejected by God. Now we cannot absolutely deny the possibility of a sincere death-bed conversion for the following reasons.

1. Because it is not absolutely impossible, that a violent fit of sickness, or an apprehension of death, should make deeper impressions on the mind, than either sermons, or exhortations, or books of devotion could ever produce. This reflection is the more solid, because the phrase, an *unconverted* man, is extremely equivocal. We call him an *unconverted* man, who profanely rusheth into all sorts of sins, and who never made one sacrifice to order; and we also, with great reason, call him an *unconverted* man, who hath renounced all sins except one. Now the idea of death may finish, in the souls of people of the latter sort, a work which they had indeed neglected, but which however was actually begun.

2. Because we are neither so fully acquainted with other peoples hearts, nor indeed with our own, as to determine whether sin have so entirely depraved all the faculties of the soul, that it is past remedy; or, whether it have arrived at that precise degree of corruption, to which the eminence of the divine perfections doth not allow a display of that efficacy, which is promised to those who desire the grace of conversion.

3. Because we find, in the holy scriptures, that some have obtained mercy, after they had committed the very crimes, the remembrance of which, we have said, ought not to drive any to despair. We meet with, at least, one example, which affords a probability, (I do not say a demonstration) that the eminence of the

S E R M. divine perfections doth not always require, that a
 IX. man, who hath spent his life in robberies, should be
 excluded from the mercy of God. We find there a
 thief who was condemned to be crucified, and who
 Luke xxiii. said to the companion of his iniquities and miseries, *we*
 41. *receive the due rewards of our deeds*: but who, notwith-
 standing all the misery of his case, applied to Jesus
 Christ, and, from his adorable mouth, received this
 43. comfortable promise, *Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt*
thou be with me in paradise.

4. Because we still see people, who, having lived
 thirty, yea fifty years in sin, have been converted in a
 time of sickness, and who, being restored to health,
 give full proof of the reality of their conversion. Such
 examples, I own, are rare, and almost unheard of, yet
 we could, perhaps, mention two or three, out of twenty
 thousand sick people, whom we have visited, or of whom
 heard, in the course of our ministry. Now the examples
 of two or three, who have been converted on a sick-
 bed, out of twenty thousand who have died without
 conversion, are sufficient to prevent our saying to one
 dying man, who should have put off his repentance
 to the last hour, that it is impossible for him to be
 converted.

5. Because God worketh miracles in religion as
 well as in nature; and because no man hath a sufficient
 knowledge of the nature of God's perfections to enable
 him to affirm that a miracle cannot, or ought not to
 be wrought in behalf of such a sinner.

6. Because we cannot find, that your pastors have
 any authority from their bibles to say to a penitent
 sinner, at any time, there is no more hope for thee;
 thou hast exhausted the mercy of God; thou art
 gotten to that period, in which we have no other mo-
 rality to preach than this, *be that is unjust, let him be*
 Rev. xxii. *unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.*
 17. On the contrary, all the directions in the holy scrip-
 tures, that relate to the exercise of our ministry, engage

us to pray for a sinner, as long as he hath a spark of S E R M. life; to endeavour to convince him as long as he is capable of reasoning; and, till he is past feeling the force IX. of motives to conversion, to do every thing, that is in our power, to convert him. But doth not all this conduct suppose that which we have been endeavouring to prove? that is, that to what degree soever a sinner may have carried his sin, how long soever he may have lived in it, there will always be a sufficiency of pardon, where there is a certainty of conversion; agreeably to the gospel that we preached to you on the last Lord's-day, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon: For my thoughts of grace and mercy must not be measured by the ideas of the finest reasoning powers; much less by those of a gloomy desponding mind, my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord: For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* This was the gospel of last Lord's-day.

The gospel of this day is, *our God is a consuming fire.* But these two gospels entirely agree, and our endeavours to comfort you, after ye have deferred your conversion to a death-bed, are not inconsistent with our endeavours to terrify and alarm you, when we perceive that ye obstinately determine to defer your repentance to that time. Moreover, the same reasons, which prevail with us to comfort you in that sad period, prevail with us to give you a salutary alarm before the fatal moment comes.

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and it is possible that the approach of death may make deeper impressions on you, than either sermons or pious books have made: But yet *our God is a consuming fire.* What a time is a dying illness for the receiving of such impressions!

S E R M. preſſions! I omit thoſe ſudden and unexpected deaths, of which we have ſo many yearly, or rather daily, examples. I omit the ſudden deaths of thoſe, who, while we were converſing and tranſacting buſineſs with them, were ſeized with violent pains, turned pale, and died, and were inſtantly ſtretched on a bier. I paſs thoſe, who went to bed healthy and well, who quietly fell aſleep, and whom we have found in the morning dead and cold. All theſe melancholy examples we omit, for one would imagine, conſidering your conduct, and hearing your converſation, that each of you had received a revelation to aſſure him of an exemption from ſudden death. But what a time is a dying illneſs for renovation and converſion! Would not one ſuppoſe, that thoſe, who hope to be converted then, have always lived among immortals, and have neither heard of death, nor ſeen a perſon die? Ah! What obſtacles! What a world of obſtacles oppoſe ſuch extravagant hopes, and juſtify the efforts of thoſe who endeavour to deſtroy them! Here, is buſineſs, that muſt be ſettled; a will, which muſt be made; a number of articles, that muſt be diſcuſſed: there, are friends, who muſt be embraced; relations, that muſt be diſſolved; children, who muſt be torn away; the ſoul muſt be writhen and rent and riven aſunder with ſighs and adieus. Here, ariſe frightful ideas of death, which have never entered the mind but amidſt numberleſs hurries of neceſſary buſineſs, or countleſs objects of deceitful pleaſures; ideas of a death, that hath been always conſidered at a diſtance, though ſo many voices have announced its approach; but the approach of which now aſtoniſhes, benumbs, and renders motionleſs: There, the illneſs increaſeth, pains multiply, agonies convulſe, the whole ſoul, full of intolerable ſenſations, loſeth the power of ſeeing and hearing, thinking and reflecting. Here, are medicines more intolerable than the malady, operations more violent than the agonies which they are deſigned to allay: There,

There, conscience, for the first time, enlightened, SERM.
awaked, and alarmed, rolls in tides of remorse; the VII.
terrible remembrance of a life spent in sin; an army of
irrefragable witnesses, from all parts arising, prove the
guilt, and denounce a sentence of death, on the depart-
ing soul. See now, whether this first reflection, which
authoriseth our endeavours to comfort and invigo-
rate your souls, when ye have deferred your conversion
to your last hour, be inconsistent with those which we
use to terrify and alarm you, when ye obstinately put
off your repentance to that time?

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and we
have neither a sufficient knowledge of other people's
hearts, nor of our own, to affirm with certainty when
their faculties are entirely contaminated: But yet, *our
God is a consuming fire*. We know men, to whom the
truth is become unintelligible, in consequence of the
disguise in which they have taken the pains to cloath
it; and who have accustomed themselves to palliate
vice, till they are become incapable of perceiving its
turpitude.

God's thoughts are not our thoughts, it is true; and we
have seen some examples of people, who have proved,
since their recovery, that they were truly converted in
sickness, and on whose account we presume that others
may possibly be converted by the same mean: But yet
our God is a consuming fire. How rare are these exam-
ples! Doth this require proof? Must we demonstrate
it? Ye are our proofs: ye, yourselves, are our demon-
strations. Who of you, (I speak of those who are of
mature age) Who of you hath not been sick, and
thought himself in danger of death? Who hath not
made resolutions in that distressing hour, and promised
God to reform? The law of these exercises forbids
certain details, and prohibits the naming of my hearers:
but I appeal to your consciences, and, if your con-
sciences be asleep, I appeal to the immortal God.
How many of you have deposited your resolutions
with

S E R M. with us, and have solemnly engaged to renounce the
 IX. world with all its sinful maxims? How many of you have imposed upon us by appearances of conversion, and have imposed upon yourselves too? How many of you should we have alledged as new examples of death-bed conversions if God had not granted you a recovery? Are ye converted indeed? Have ye renounced the world and its maxims? Ah! were we to judge, by the conduct of those who have recovered, of the state of those who are dead My brethren, I dare not examine the matter, but I leave it to your meditation.

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and God worketh miracles in religion as well as in nature: But yet, *our God is a consuming fire*. Who can assure himself that, having abused common grace, he shall obtain extraordinary assistances?

It is true, *God's thoughts are not our thoughts*; and there is nothing in the holy scriptures, which impowers us to shut the gates of heaven against a dying penitent; we have no authority to tell you, that there is no more hope for you, but that ye are lost without remedy: But yet, *our God is a consuming fire*. There are hundreds of passages in our bibles, which authorise us, what am I saying? there are hundreds of passages that command us, under the penalty of suffering all the punishments that belong to the crime, not to conceal any thing from the criminal: there are hundreds of passages which impower and injoin us to warn you, you, who are fifty years of age; you, who are sixty; you, who are fourscore; that still to put off the work of your conversion, is a madness, an excess of inflexibility and indolence, which all the flames of hell can never expiate.

To conclude. This is an article, of which we, your pastors, hope to give a good account to God, how ever unworthy we are of his approbation. How often have we represented the danger of your procrastinations?

Ye

Ye walls of this church! were ye capable of giving S E R M.
evidence, we would take you to witness. But we appeal IX.
to you, ye sermons, that have been preached in this
assembly! ye shall be recollected in that great day, in
which each of our hearers shall give an account of the
use that he hath made of you. Ye consciences, that have
heard our directions! ye shall bear witness. Ye gain-
sayers! ye yourselves shall bear witness, ye who, by
reversing those ideas which the gospel giveth us of the
mercy of God, have so often pretended to obscure
those which we have endeavoured to give of his justice
and vengeance: *We are pure from your blood, we have* Acts xx.
not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. When 26, 27.
we stand at his tribunal, and, under a sense of the
weakness with which our ministry was accompanied,
say to him, *Enter not into judgment with thy servants O* Ps. cxliii.
Lord! Each of us will venture to add, with a view to 2.
the importunity that had been used to prevail with you
to improve your precious moments, *I have preached righ-* Ps. xl. 9.
teousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained 11.
my lips O Lord, thou knowest. Withhold not thou thy
tender mercies from me, O Lord. I have spent my strength Isa. xlix.
for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with 4.
the Lord, and my work with my God.

O! may God animate us with more noble motives!
God grant, not that the eternal misery of our hearers
may be the apology of our ministry: but that ye may Phil. iv. 1.
be our joy and crown in the day of Christ! Amen. l. 10.

The first of the "Lamentations" is a poem of grief and
 sorrow, written by the prophet Jeremiah. It is a lament
 over the destruction of Jerusalem, which had been
 captured by the Babylonians. The poem is written in
 the first person, and the speaker is the prophet
 himself. He describes the city as a "desolation"
 and a "waste," and he laments the loss of the
 temple and the city's walls. He also laments the
 loss of the people, who have been taken into
 captivity. The poem is a powerful expression of
 grief and sorrow, and it is a testament to the
 power of the human spirit to endure even the
 most difficult of circumstances.

S E R M O N X.

The P A T I E N C E of G O D with
wicked Nations.

S E R M O N

The Patience of God with
Unbelievers

Part 2

Vol. 1

S E R M O N X.

The P A T I E N C E of G O D with wicked Nations.

GENESIS XV. 16.

The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

IT is a shocking disposition of mind, which Solomon describes in that well known passage in Ecclesiastes : *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* It seems, at first sight, as if the wise man had rather exceeded in his portrait of the human heart : or that, if there were any originals, they could only be a few monsters, from whose souls were eradicated all the seeds of religion and piety, as well as every degree of reason and humanity. God is patient towards all who offend him : then, let us offend him without remorse, let us try the utmost extent of his patience. God lifteth over our heads a mighty hand, armed with lightnings and thunderbolts, but this hand is usually suspended a while before it strikes ; then let us dare it while it delays, and till it moves to crush us to pieces let us not respect it. What a disposition ! What a shocking disposition of mind is this my brethren !

But let us rend the vails with which we conceal ourselves from ourselves : let us penetrate those secret recesses of our consciences, into which we never enter
but

S E R M. but when we are forced; let us go to the bottom of a
 x. heart naturally *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*, and we shall find that this disposition of mind, which at first sight inspires us with horror, is the disposition: of whom? Of the greatest part of this assembly, my brethren. Could we persist in sin without the patience of God? Dare we live in that shameful security, with which the ministers of the living God so justly reproach us, if God had authorized them to
 Jonah iii. cry in our street, *Yet forty days, yet forty days?* Had we seen Ananias and Sapphira fall at St. Peter's feet,
 Acts v. 1. as soon as they *kept back part of the price of their possession*: in a word, could we have the madness to add sin to sin, if we were really convinced, that God entertained the formidable design of bearing with us no longer, but of precipitating us into the gulfs of hell on the very first act of rebellion? Why then do we rebel every day? It is for the reason alledged by the wise man: It is because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily: *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

I intend to day, my brethren, to endeavour to dissipate the dark clouds, with which your security obscures the designs of a patient God, who hath been
 2 Pet. iii. patient towards you, *long-suffering towards all*, and who
 9. is exercising his patience toward you this day. But who can tell how much longer he intends to bear with you? Let us enter into the matter. I design to consider our text principally with a view to *the riches of the forbearance, and long-suffering of God*: for it treats of a mystery of justice which interests all mankind. God bears with the most wicked nations a long while, and, having borne a long while with the rebellion of ancestors, bears also a long while with that of their descendants: but, at length, collecting the rebellion of both into one point of vengeance, he punisheth a people who have abused his patience, and proportioneth his punishments

ments to the length of time which had been granted S E R M.
to avert them. X.

All these solemn truths are included in the sententious words of the text: *The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* I hasten to explain them, in order to employ the most of the precious moments of attention, with which ye deign to favour me, in deriving such practical instructions from them as they afford. Promote our design, my dear brethren. Let not the forbearance, which the love of God now affords you, *set your hearts fully to do evil.* And thou, O almighty and long-suffering God! whose treasures of forbearance perhaps this nation may have already exhausted! O thou just avenger of sin! who perhaps mayest be about to punish our crimes, now ripe for vengeance, O suspend its execution till we make some profound reflections on the objects before us! O let the ardent prayers of our Abrahams, and of our Lots, prevail with thee to lengthen the forbearance, which thou hast already exercised toward this church, these provinces, and every sinner in this assembly! Amen.

The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. These words were addressed to Abraham by God himself. He had just before given him a victory over five kings, and had promised him blessings more glorious than all those which he had received before. He had said to him, *Fear not, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward.* Gen. xv. r.
But the Patriarch thought that these great promises could not be accomplished, because he had no posterity, and was far advanced in age. God relieves him from this fear, by promising him, not only a son, but a posterity, which should equal the stars of heaven in number, and should possess a country as extensive as their wants: but at the same time he told him, that, before the accomplishment of these promises, his seed should be either strangers in the land of Canaan, the conquest of which should be reserved for them, or subject to the Egyptians, for the space of four hundred 2.
4.
5.
13.
years:

S E R M. years: that, at the expiration of that period, they
 X. should quit their slavery, laden with the spoils of
 16. Egypt: that, *in the fourth generation*, they should re-
 turn into the land of Canaan, where Abraham dwelt
 when the Lord addressed these words to him: that
 then they should conquer the country, and should be
 the ministers of God's vengeance on the Canaanites,
 whose abominations even now deserved severe punish-
 ments, but which God would at present defer, be-
 cause the wretched people had not yet filled up the
 measure of their crimes.

This is a general view of our text in connection
 with the context. *Know of a surety, that thy seed shall
 be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve
 them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And
 also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and
 afterward shall they come out with great substance. And
 thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried
 in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall
 come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not
 yet full.*

If ye would understand these words more particu-
 larly, attend to a few remarks, which we shall only
 mention in brief, because a discussion of them would
 divert our attention too far from the principal design
 of this discourse.*

We include in the *four hundred years*, mentioned in
 the context, the time that the Israelites dwelt in Canaan
 from the birth of Isaac, and the time which they dwelt
 in Egypt from the promotion of Joseph. Indeed,
 strictly speaking, these two periods contain *four hundred
 and five years*. But every body knows that authors,
 both sacred and profane, to avoid fractions, sometimes
 add, and sometimes diminish, in their calculations.

Ver. 40.

In the twelfth chapter of Exodus, Moses saith, *The
 children*

* This whole subject is treated at large in Mons. Saurin's *xivth
 Dissertation on the Bible*. Tom. Prem.

children of Israel dwelt in Egypt four hundred and thirty years; but it is beyond a doubt, that he useth a concise way of speaking in this passage, and that the Seventy had reason for paraphrasing the words thus: *The sojourning of the children of Israel, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, AND in the land of Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.* If the reasonableness of this paraphrase be allowed, there will still remain a difference of thirty years between the time fixed in Genesis by the Lord for the conquest of Canaan, and the time mentioned by Moses in Exodus, but it is easy to reconcile this seeming difference, for the calculation in Genesis begins at the birth of Isaac, but the other commences at Abraham's arrival in Canaan. The reckoning is exact, for Abraham dwelt twenty five years in Canaan before Isaac was born, and there were four hundred and five years from the birth of Isaac to the departure out of Egypt. This is the meaning of the passage quoted from Exodus, and, as it perfectly agrees with our context, we shall conclude that this first article is sufficiently explained.

Our second regards the meaning of the word *generation*, which is mentioned in the context. This term is equivocal: sometimes it signifies the whole age of each person in a succession; and in this sense the evangelist says, that *from Abraham to David are fourteen generations.* Sometimes it is put for the whole duration of a living multitude; and in this sense Jesus Christ useth it, when he saith that *this generation*, that is, all his cotemporaries, *shall not pass away, till his prophecies concerning them were fulfilled.* Sometimes it signifies a period of ten years; and in this sense it is used in the book of Baruch; the captivity in Babylon, which continued, we know, seventy years, is there said to remain *seven generations.*

We understand the word now in the first sense, and we mean that, from the arrival of the Israelites in Egypt, to the time of their migration, there were

S E R M. four successions: The first was the generation of *Kohath*, the son of *Levi*; the second of *Amram* the son of *X.* *Kohath*; the third was that of *Moses* and *Aaron*; and *Ex. vi. 16.* the fourth was that of *the children* of *Moses* and *Aaron*.
 18.
 20, &c.

Our third observation relates to the word *Amorites* in our text. *The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* The word *Amorites* hath two significations in scripture: a particular, and a general meaning. It hath a particular meaning when it denotes the descendants of *Hamor*, the fourth son of *Canaan*, who first inhabited a mountainous country westward of the dead sea, and afterward spread themselves eastward of that sea, between the rivers *Jabbok*, and *Arnon*, having dispossessed the *Amorites* and *Moabites*. *Sihon* and *Og*, two of their kings, were defeated by *Moses*.
 Gen. x. 16.
 Joth. xii.
 23.

But the word *Amorites* is sometimes used in a more general sense, and denotes all the inhabitants of *Canaan*. To cite many proofs would divert our attention too far from our principal design, let it suffice therefore to observe that we take the word in our text in this general meaning.

But what crimes does the spirit of God include in the word *iniquity*? *The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* Here, my brethren, a detail would be horrid, for so great were the excesses of these people, that we should, in some sense, partake of their crimes, by attempting to give an exact list of them. So excessive was the idolatry of the *Canaanites*, that they rendered the honours of supreme adoration not only to the most mean, but even to the most impure and infamous creatures. Their inhumanity was so excessive that they sacrificed their own children to their Gods. And so monstrous was their subversion, not only of the laws of nature, but even of the common irregularities of human nature, that a vice, which must not be named, was openly practised: and, in short, so scandalous was the depravation of religion and good manners, that
 Moses

Moses, after he had given the Israelites laws against S E R M.
the most gross idolatry, against incest, against bestiality, X.
against that other crime, which our dismal circum-
stances oblige us to mention, in spite of so many reasons
for avoiding it; Moses, I say, after having forbidden
all these excesses to the Israelites, positively declares
that the Canaanites were guilty of them all: that the
earth was weary of such execrable monsters; and that
for these crimes, God had sent the Israelites to destroy
them. *Defile not yourselves*, says he in the book of xviii. 24.
Leviticus, (after an enumeration of the most shame- 25.
ful vices that can be imagined) *Defile not your-*
selves in any of these things, for in all these, the nations
are defiled which I cast out before you. Therefore I do
visit the iniquity thereof, and the land itself vomiteth out
her inhabitants. And again in the twelfth chapter of
Deuteronomy, *Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared* Ver. 30.
by following them, after that they be destroyed from before
thee, and that thou enquire not saying, How
did these nations even so will I do likewise.
Such were the iniquities that God forbore to punish
for many ages, and at last punished with a severity,
in appearance, contrary to his equity: but there is
nothing astonishing in it to those who consult the fore-
mentioned maxim, that is, that it is equitable in God
to proportion the punishments of guilty nations to the
time granted for their repentance.

We observe lastly, that, though God in his infinite
mercy had determined to bear *four hundred years* longer
with nations, unworthy of his patience, there was one
sin excepted from this general goodness, there was one
of their iniquities that drew down the most formidable
preternatural punishments upon those who committed
it, and forced divine justice to anticipate, by a swift
vengeance, a punishment, which, in other cases, was
deferred for four whole ages. S. Paul paints this
iniquity in the most odious colours in the first of
Romans, and it was constantly punished with death

SERM. by the Jews. Read with a holy fear the nineteenth chapter of Genesis. The inhabitants of the cities of the plain were possessed with a more than brutal madness. Two angels in human forms are sent to deliver Lot from the judgments which are about to destroy them. The amiable borrowed forms of these intelligences strike the eyes of the inhabitants of Sodom, and excite their abominable propensities to sin. A croud of people, young and old, instantly surround the house of Lot, in order to seize the celestial messengers, and to offer violence to them, and though they are stricken blind they persist in feeling for doors which they cannot see. Sodom and Gomorrah, Adma and Zeboim, being inhabited by none but people of this abominable kind, are all given up to the vengeance due to their crimes. *The Lord raineth fire and brimstone*

Gen. xix.
24.

from the Lord. The brimstone inkindled penetrates so far into the veins of bitumen, and other inflammable bodies, of which the ground is full, that it forms a lake, denominated in scripture the *dead sea*: and, to use the words of an apocryphal writer, *the waste land that smoketh, and plants bearing fruit that never come to ripeness, are even to this day a testimony of the wickedness of the five cities.* In vain had Lot vexed his righteous

2 Pet. ii. 8.

soul from day to day; In vain had Abraham availed himself of all the interest that piety gave him in the compassion of a merciful God; In vain had the abundance of his fervent benevolence said, Behold now, I

Gen. xviii.
27, 23, &c.

have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes: Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; peradventure forty; peradventure twenty; peradventure ten: The decree of divine vengeance must be executed. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. God grant that ye may never know any thing more of these terrible executions than what ye learn from the history just now related!

Ps. ii. 10.

I return

I return to my subject, except to that part of it S E R M.
K.
last mentioned, the sin of the cities of the plain. The iniquities of the Canaanites were suffered for more than four hundred years; so long would God defer the destruction of the Amorites by Israel, because till then their iniquity would not have attained its height. And why would he defer the destruction of these miserable people till their iniquities should have attained their height? This, as we said in the beginning, is the subject upon which we are going to fix your attention. God exerciseth his patience long toward the most wicked people, having borne with the rebellion of ancestors, he bears with the rebellion of their posterity, and whole ages pass without visible punishment: but, at length, collecting the rebellions of parents and children into one point of vengeance, he poureth out his indignation on whole nations that have abused his patience; and, as I advanced before, and think it necessary to repeat again, he proportioneth his vindictive visitations to the length of time that had been granted to avert them. *I will judge that nation whom thy descendants shall serve, but it shall be in the fourth generation, because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

The remaining time, with which ye condescend yet to favour me, I shall employ in considering

- I. The nature of this œconomy.
- II. The goodness and justice which characterise it.
- III. The terrors that accompany it.
- IV. The relation which it bears to our own dismal circumstances.

Let us consider I. The nature of this œconomy. Recollect an observation that hath been made by most of those, who have laid down rules to assist us in reasoning justly. That is, that we are sometimes to consider a nation, in a moral light, as a person, consisting of a body, a soul, and a duration of life. All the people who compose this nation are considered as one body: the maxims which direct its conduct in peace or in war, in commerce or in religion, constitute what we call

S E R M. call the spirit, or soul of this body. The ages of its continuance are considered as the duration of its life. This parallel might be easily enlarged.

Upon this principle, we attribute to those who compose a nation now, what, properly speaking, agrees only with those who formerly composed it. Thus we say that the same nation was delivered from bondage in Egypt in the reign of Pharaoh, which was delivered from slavery in Babylon in the reign of Cyrus. In the same sense, Jesus Christ tells the Jews of his time, *Moses gave you not that bread from heaven*; not that the same persons, who had been delivered from Egypt, were delivered from Babylon; nor that the Jews, to whom Moses had given manna in the desert, were the same to whom Jesus Christ gave bread from heaven: but because the Jews, who lived under the reign of Cyrus, and those who lived in the time of Pharaoh, those who lived in the time of Moses, and those who lived in the time of Jesus Christ, were considered as different parts of that moral body, called the Jewish nation.

On this principle, (and this has a direct view to our subject) we attribute to this whole body, not only those physical, but even those moral actions, which belong only to one part of it. We ascribe the praise, or the blame of an action to a nation, though those who performed it have been dead many ages. We say that the Romans, who had courage to oppose even the shadow of tyranny under their consuls, had the meanness to adore tyrants under their emperors. And, what is still more remarkable, we consider that part of a nation which continues, responsible for the crimes of that which subsists no more.

Chap. xi. A passage in the gospel of S. Luke will clearly
47. illustrate our meaning. *Wo unto you: for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them; Mat.xxiii. and ye say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we 30. would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the*

the prophets. Truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the S E R M.
 deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye X.
 build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of
 God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of
 them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the
 prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world,
 may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel,
 unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the
 altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be
 required of this generation.

We will not enquire now what Zacharias is here
 spoken of. Interpreters are not agreed. Some say it
 is the same person who is spoken of in the second book ^{xxiv. 20;}
 of Chronicles, who was extraordinarily raised up to ^{21.}
 stem that torrent of corruption, with which the Jews
 were carried away after the death of the high priest
 Jehoida. He succeeded his father Jehoida in his zeal,
 and fell a victim for it, for he was stoned to death in
 the porch of the temple, by those whom he endeavoured
 to reform. Others say that it is a Zacharias, men-
 tioned by the historian Josephus*, whose virtue ren-
 dered him formidable to those madmen, who are
 known by the name of zealots; they charged him
 unjustly with the most shocking crimes, and put him
 to death as if he had actually committed them. A
 third opinion is, that it is he, whom we call one of the
 lesser prophets. But, not to detain you on this subject
 which perhaps may not be easily determined, we may
 observe in our Saviour's words the manner of con-
 sidering a nation as a moral person, who is responsible
 at one time for crimes committed at another, who hath
 been borne with, but hath abused that forbearance,
 and, at length, is punished both for committing the
 crimes, and for abusing the forbearance that had been
 granted. Verily I say unto you, upon you shall come all
 the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of
 righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, whom ye slew
 between the temple and the altar.

The

* Bell. Jud. iv. 19.

S E R M.

x.

The Amorites in my text must be considered, in like manner, as a moral person, whose life God had resolved, when he spoke to Abraham, to prolong four hundred years; who, during that four hundred years, would abuse his patience; and at last would be punished for all the crimes which should be committed in that long period. *And that nation whom they shall serve will I judge: But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

This is the nature of this œconomy of Providence. We shall see, in a second article, the perfections of God which shine in it, and, in particular, that goodness, and that justice, which eminently characterise all his actions.

II. It is extremely easy to distinguish the goodness of this œconomy, and, as we are under a necessity of abridging our subject, we may safely leave this article to your own meditation. To exercise patience four hundred years toward a people, who worshipped the most infamous creatures; a people who sacrificed human victims; a people abandoned to the most enormous crimes; to defer the extinction of such a people for four hundred years, could only proceed from the goodness of that God, who is *long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

1 Pet. iii.
9.

It is more difficult to discover the justice of God in this œconomy. What! The Jews, who lived in the time of Jesus Christ, could they be justly punished for murders committed so many ages before their birth? What! Could they be responsible for the blood of the prophets, in which their hands had never been imbrued? What! Could God demand an account of all this blood of them? How! The Canaanites of Joshua's time, ought they to be punished for all the abominations of four hundred years? What! Ought we to terrify you to day, not only with your own sins, but with all those that have been committed in your provinces from the moment of their first settlement?

I answer,

I answer, If that part of a nation which subsists in S E R M. X.
one period hath no union of time with that which subsisted in another period, it may have an union of another kind, it may have even four different unions, any one of which is sufficient to justify Providence: there is an union of *interest*; an union of *approbation*; an union of *emulation*; and (if ye will allow the expression) an union of *accumulation*. An union of *interest*, if it avail itself of the crimes of its predecessors; an union of *approbation*, if it applaud the shameful causes of its prosperity; an union of *emulation*, if it follow such examples as ought to be detested; an union of *accumulation*, if, instead of making amends for these faults, it reward the depravity of those who commit them. In all these cases, God inviolably maintains the laws of his justice, when he uniteth in one point of vengeance the crimes which a nation is committing now with those which were committed many ages before; and poureth out those judgments on the part that remains, which that had deserved who had lived many ages ago. Yes, if men peaceably enjoy the usurpations of their ancestors, they are usurpers, as their predecessors were, and the justice of God may make these responsible for the usurpations of those. Thus it was with the Jews, who lived in the time of Jesus Christ: Thus it was with the Amorites, who lived four hundred years after those, of whom God spake to Abraham: and thus we must expect it to be with us, for we also shall deserve the punishments due to our ancestors, if we have any one of the unions with them, which hath been mentioned. Your meditation will supply what is wanting to this article.

It sometimes falls out in this œconomy, that the innocent suffer while the guilty escape: But neither this, nor any other inconvenience, that may attend this œconomy, is to be compared with the advantages of it. The obligation of a citizen to submit to the decision of an ignorant, or a corrupt judge, is an inconvenience

SERMON. *venience in society: however, this inconvenience ought*
 X. *not to free other men from submitting to decisions at*
law; because the benefits, that society derives from a
judicial mode of decision, will exceed, beyond all com-
parison, the evils that may attend a perversion of justice
in a very few cases. Society would be in continual
confusion, were the members of it allowed sometimes
to resist the decisions of their lawful judges. Private
disputes would never end; public quarrels would be
eternal; and administration of justice would be futile
and useless.

Beside, Providence hath numberless ways of reme-
 dying the inconveniences of this just oeconomy, and
 of indemnifying all those innocent persons, who may
 be involved in punishments due to the guilty. If,
 when God sendeth fruitful seasons to a nation, to re-
 ward their good use of the fruits of the earth, an indi-
 vidual destitute of virtue, reap the benefit of those who
 are virtuous, an infinitely wise Providence can find
 ways to poison all his pleasures, and to prevent his en-
 joyment of the prosperity of the just. If an innocent
 person be involved in a national calamity, an infinitely
 wise Providence knows how to indemnify him for all
 that he may sacrifice to that justice, which requires
 that a notoriously wicked nation should become a no-
 torious example of God's abhorrence of wickedness.

Having established these principles, let us apply
 them to the words of Jesus Christ, which were just now
 quoted, and to the text.

The Jewish nation, considered in the just light of
 a moral person, was guilty of an innumerable mul-
 titude of the most atrocious crimes. It had not
 only not profited by the earnest exhortations of those
 extraordinary men, whom heaven had raised up to
 rectify its mistakes, and to reform its morals: but it
 had risen up against them as enemies of society, who
 came to trouble the peace of mankind. When they
 had the courage faithfully to reprove the excesses of
 its

its princes, they were accused of opposing the regal S E R M.
authority itself; when they ventured to attack errors, X,
that were in credit with the ministers of religion, they
were taxed with resisting religion itself; and, under
these pretences, they were frequently put to death.
Witness the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, the apostle
S. James, and Jesus Christ his self.

God had often exhorted that nation to repent, and
had urged the most tender and the most terrible mo-
tives to repentance; one while he loaded it with be-
nefits, another while he threatened it with punishments.
Sometimes he supported the authority of his messages
by national judgments; sermons were legible by light-
ning, and thunder procured attention, doctrines were
reiterated by pestilence and famine, and exhortations
were re-echoed by banishment and war. All these
means had been ineffectual, if they had produced any
alteration, it had been only an apparent or a momen-
tary change, which had vanished with the violent means
that produced it. The Jewish nation was always the
same; always a stiff-necked nation; always inimical
to truth, and infatuated with falsehood; always averse
to reproof, and athirst for the blood of its prophets.
What the Jews were in the times of the prophets, that
they were in the times of Jesus Christ and his apostles;
they were full as barbarous to Jesus Christ as to Ze-
chariah the son of Barachiah.

A time must come in which divine justice ought to
prevent the fatal consequences of a longer forbearance;
a time in which the whole world must be convinced
that God's toleration of sinners is no approbation of
sin; a time when general vengeance must justify Pro-
vidence by rendering to all the due reward of their
deeds. Such a time was at hand when Jesus Christ
spoke to the Jews; and, foreseeing the miseries that
would overwhelm Judea, he told them that God would
require an account, not only of the blood of all the
prophets, which they had spilt, but of all the murders

S E R M. that had been committed on earth from the death of
 x. Abel to the slaughter of Zechariah.

Thus it was with the Amorites : and thus it will be with your provinces, if ye avail yourselves of the crimes of your predecessors, if ye extenuate the guilt, if ye imitate the practice, if ye *fill up the measure* of their iniquities. Then divine justice, collecting into one point of vengeance all the crimes of the nation, will inflict punishments proportional to the time that was granted to avert them. Thus we have sufficiently proved the justice of this oeconomy.

Psa. xc.
 7, 8.

III. Let us remark the terrors that accompany this dispensation. But where can we find expressions sufficiently sad, or images sufficiently shocking and gloomy, to describe those terrible times. The soul of Moses dissolved in considering them ; *by thy wrath we are troubled ; thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.* Every thing that asswageth the anger of the judge of the world is useless here. The exercise of prayer, that exercise, which sinners have sometimes used with success to the suspending of the anger of God, to the holding of his avenging arm, and to the disarming of him of his vindictive rod, that exercise hath lost all its efficacy and power ; *God covereth himself with a cloud that prayer cannot pass through.* The intercession of venerable men, who have sometimes stood in the breach, and turned away his wrath, cannot be admitted now ;

Lam. iii.
 44.

Jer. xv. 1. *though Moses and Samuel stood before God, yet his mind could not be toward this people.* Those sanctuaries, which have been consecrated to divine worship, and which have so often afforded refuges in times of danger, have lost their noble privilege, and are themselves involved in the direful calamity ; *The Lord casteth off his altar, abhorreth his sanctuary, giveth up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces, and they make a noise in the house of the Lord as in the day of a solemn feast.* The cries of children, which have

Lam. ii. 7.

have sometimes melted down the hearts of the most inflexible enemies, those cries cannot now excite the mercy of God, the innocent creatures themselves fall victims to his displeasure; *the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city, they say to their mothers, where is corn and wine? The hands of pitiful women seek their own children, they are their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.* The treasures of grace, which have been so often opened to sinners, and from which they have derived converting power, in order to free them from the executions of justice, these treasures are now quite exhausted; God saith, *I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon my vineyard: Go, make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* O God! thou consuming fire! O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, how fearful a thing is it to fall into thy hands! How dreadful are thy footsteps, when, in the cool fierceness of thine indignation, thou comest to fall upon a sinner! *The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, shall be required of this generation: from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zecharias; verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.*

S E R M.
X.

ii. 12.

iv. 10.

Isa. v. 6.

vi. 9, 10.

Deut. iv.

24.

Psa. xciv.

1.

Heb. x.

31.

IV. To conclude. We have proved that there is a fatal period, in which God will unite the sins of a nation in one point of vengeance, and will proportion the punishments, which he useth to exterminate them, to the length of time that he had granted for preventing them. And from this principle which will be the ground of our exhortations in the close of this discourse, I infer, that as there is a particular repentance imposed on every member of society so there is a national repentance, which regards all who compose a nation. The repentance of an individual doth not consist in merely asking pardon for his sins, and in endeavouring to correct the bad habits, that he hath formed;

S E R M. formed; but it requires also that the sinner should go
 X. back to his first years, remember, as far as he can, the
 sins that defiled his youth, lament every period of his
 existence, which, having been signalized by some divine
 favour, was also signalized by some marks of ingrati-
 tude; it requireth him to say, under a sorrowful sense
 of having offended a kind and tender God, *I was shapen*
in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me. O
 Lord, remember not the sins of my youth. *Wilt thou break*
a leaf driven to and fro? Wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?
thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth! In
 like manner the repentance of a nation doth not consist
 in a bare attention to present disorders, and to the
 luxury that now cry to the judge of the world for
 vengeance: but it requireth us to go back to the times
 of our ancestors, and to examine whether we be now
 enjoying the wages of their unrighteousness, and whe-
 ther, while we flatter ourselves with the opinion that
 we have not committed their vices, we be not now re-
 lishing productions of them. Without this we shall be
 responsible for the very vices which they committed,
 though time hath almost blotted out the remembrance
 of them; and the justice of God threateneth to involve
 us in the same punishments: *The blood of all the pro-*
phets, which was shed from the foundation of the world,
shall be required of this generation: from the blood of Abel
to the blood of Zecharias: verily I say unto you, it shall be
required of this generation.

Dreadful thought! my brethren. A thought that
 may very justly disturb that shameful security, into
 which our nation is sunk. I tremble, when I think
 of some disorders, which my eyes have seen during the
 course of my ministry among you. I do not mean the
 sins of individuals, which would fill a long and a very
 mortifying list: I mean public sins, committed in the
 face of the sun; maxims, received, in a manner, by
 church and state, and which loudly cry to heaven for
 vengeance against this republic. In these degenerate
 times,

times, I have seen immorality and infidelity authorised S E R M.
by a connivance at scandalous books, which are in- X.
tended to destroy the distinctions of vice and virtue,
and to make the difference between just and unjust
appear a mere chimera. In these degenerate days, I
have seen the oppressed church cry in vain for succour
for her children, while the reformation of the church
was sacrificing to the policy of the state. In this
degenerate age, I have seen solemn days insolently pro-
faned by those, whom worldly decency alone ought to
have engaged to observe them. In these days of
depravity, I have seen hatred and discord lodge among
us, and labour in the untoward work of reciprocal
ruin. In these wretched times, I have seen the spirit
of intolerance unchained with all its rage, and the very
men, who incessantly exclaim against the persecutions
that have affected themselves, turn persecutors of
others: so that, at the close of a religious exercise, men,
who ought to have remembered what they had heard,
and to have applied it to themselves, have been known
to exercise their ingenuity in finding heresy in the ser-
mon, in communicating the same wicked industry to
their families, and to their children, and, under pretence
of religion, in preventing all the good effects that
religious discourses might have produced. In this
degenerate age.

But this shameful list is already too long. Doth
this nation repent of its past sins? Doth it lament the
crimes of its ancestors? Alas! far from repenting of
our past sins, far from lamenting the crimes of our
ancestors, doth not the least attention perceive new and
more shocking excesses? The wretched age, in which
providence hath placed us, doth it not seem to have
taken that for its model, against which God displayed
his vengeance, as we have been describing in this
discourse? Were Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah
and Zeboim destroyed by fire from heaven for sins
unknown to us? And God knows, God only knows,
what

S E R M. what dreadful discoveries the formidable but pious
 x. vigilance of our magistrates may still make. O God,
 Gen. xviii. Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto thee, al-
 25, &c. though I am but dust and ashes. Wilt thou also destroy
 the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be
 fifty righteous among us? peradventure forty? peradven-
 ture thirty? peradventure twenty? peradventure ten?

My brethren, God yet bears with you, but how long
 he will bear with you, who can tell? And do not
 deceive yourselves, his forbearance must produce, in
 the end, either your conversion or your destruction.
 The Lord grant it may produce your conversion,
 Eze. xviii. and so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Amen.
 30.

S E R M O N XI.

The LONG-SUFFERING of GOD with Individuals.

S E R M O N XI.

The LONG-SUFFERING of GOD with Individuals.

ECCLESIASTES viii. 11, 12.

*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. For the sinner doth evil an hundred times, and God prolongeth his days.**

THE wise man points out, in the words of the text, one general cause of the impenitence of mankind. The disposition, to which he attributes it, I own, seems shocking and almost incredible: but if we examine our *deceitful and desperately wicked hearts*, Jer. xvii. we shall find, that this disposition, which, at first sight, 9. seems so shocking, is one of those, with which we are too well acquainted. *The heart of the sons of men is fully set to do evil. Why? Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily.*

This shameful, but too common, inclination, we will endeavour to expose, and to shew you that the long-suffering, which the mercy of God grants to sinners, may be abused either in the disposition of a devil, or in that of a beast, or in that of a philosopher, or in that of a man.

He, who devotes his health, his prosperity, and his youth, to offend God, and, while his punishment is

* We have followed the reading of the French Bible in this passage.

S E R M. deferred, to invent new ways of blaspheming him; he,
 XI. who followeth such a shameful course of life, abuseth the patience of God in the disposition of a *devil*.

He, who enervates and impairs his reason, either by excessive debauchery, or by worldly dissipations, by an effeminate luxury, or by an inactive stupidity, and pays no regard to the great end for which God permits him to live in this world, abuseth the patience of God in the disposition of a *beast*.

He, who from the long-suffering of God infers consequences against his providence, and against his hatred of sin, is in the disposition, of which my text speaks, as a *philosopher*.

He, who concludes because the patience of God hath continued to this day that it will always continue, and makes such a hope a motive to persist in sin without repentance or remorse, abuseth the patience of God in the disposition of a *man*. As I shall point out these principles to you, I shall shew you the injustice and extravagance of them.

I. To devote health, prosperity, and youth, to offend God, and to invent new ways of blaspheming him, while the punishment of him who leads such a shameful life is deferred, is to abuse the long-suffering of God like a *devil*.

The majesty of this place, the holiness of my ministry, and the delicacy of my hearers, forbid precision on this article, for there would be a shocking impropriety in exhibiting a well-drawn portrait of such a man. But, if it is criminal to relate such excesses, what must it be to commit them? It is but too certain, however, that nature sometimes produceth such infernal creatures, who, with the bodies of men, have the sentiments of devils. Thanks be to God, the characters, which belong to this article, must be taken from other countries though not from ancient history.

I speak of those abominable men, to whom living and moving would be intolerable, were they to pass one

one day without insulting the author of their life and motion. The grand design of all their actions is to break down every boundary, that either modesty, probity, or even a corrupt and irregular conscience hath set to licentiousness. They bitterly lament the paucity of the ways of violating their Creator's laws, and they employ all the power of their wit, the play of their fancy, and the fire of their youth, to supply the want. Like that impious king, of whom the scripture speaks, *Dan. v. 2.* they carouse with the sacred vessels, and then they profanely abuse in their festivity: them did I say? The most solemn truths, and the most venerable mysteries of religion, they take into their polluted mouths, and display their infidelity and impurity in ridiculing them. They hurry away a life, which is become insipid to them, because they have exhausted all resources of blasphemy against God, and they hasten to hell to learn others of the infernal spirits, their patterns and their protectors.

Let us throw a veil, my brethren, over these abominations, and let us turn away our eyes from objects so shameful to human nature. But how comes it to pass, that rational creatures, having ideas of right and wrong, arrive at such a subversion of reason, and such a degree of corruption, as to be pleased with a course of life, which carries its pains and punishments with it?

Sometimes this phenomenon must be attributed to a vicious education. We seldom pay a sufficient regard to the influence that education hath over the whole life. We often entertain false, and oftener still inadequate notions of what is called *a good education*. We have given, it is generally thought, a good education to a youth, when we have taught him an art, or trained him up in a science; when we have instructed him how to arrange a few dry words in his head, or a few crude notions in his fancy; and we are highly satisfied when we have intrusted the cultivation of his tender heart to a man of probity. We forget that

S E R M. that the venom of sin impregnates the air that he
 XI. breathes, and communicates itself to him by all that he sees, and by all that he hears. If we would give young people a good education, we must forbid them all acquaintance with those who do not delight in decency and piety: we must never suffer them to hear debauchery and impiety spoken of without detestation: we must furnish them with precautions previous to their travels, in which, under pretence of acquainting themselves with the manners of foreigners, they too often adopt nothing but their vices: we must banish from our universities those shocking irregularities, and annihilate those dangerous privileges, which make the means of education the very causes of corruption and ruin.

Sometimes these excesses are owing to the connivance, or the countenance of princes. We have never more reason to predict the destruction of a state than when the reins of government are committed to men of a certain character. It will require ages to heal the wounds of one impious reign. An irreligious reign emboldens vice, and multiplies infamous places for the commission of it. In an irreligious reign scandalous books are published, and it becomes fashionable to question whether there be a God in heaven, or any real difference between virtue and vice on earth. In the space of an irreligious reign offices are held by unworthy persons, who either abolish, or suffer to languish, the laws that policy had provided against impiety. Histories, more recent than those of Tiberius and Nero, would too fully exemplify our observations, were not the majesty of princes, in some sort, respectable, even after they are no more.

Sometimes these excesses, which offer violence to nature, are caused by a gratification of those which are agreeable to the corruption of nature. Ordinary sins become insipid by habit, and sinners are forced, having arrived at some periods of corruption, to endeavour to
 satisfy

satisfy their execrable propensities by the commission S E R M.
of those crimes, which once made them shudder with XI.
horror.

To all these reasons add the judgment of divine
Providence; for *God giveth those up to uncleanness*, who Rom. 5.
have made no use of the means of instruction and piety, ²⁴
which he had afforded them.

I repeat my thanksgivings to God, the protector of
these states, that among our youth, (though, alas! so
far from that piety which persons, dedicated to God
by baptism, ought to possess) we have none of this
character. Indeed, had we such a monster among
us, we should neither oppose him by private advice
nor by public preaching: but we should think that
the arm of the secular magistrate was a likelier mean
of repulsing him than the decision of a casuist. Let
none be offended at this. Our ministry is a ministry
of compassion, I grant; and we are sent by a master
who willeth not the death of a sinner: but, if we
thought that compassion obliged us on any occasions
to implore your clemency, my Lords, for some male-
factors, whom your wise laws, and the safety of society,
condemn to die, we would rather intercede for assassins,
and highway robbers, yea for those miserable wretches,
whose execrable avarice tempts them to import infected
commodities, which expose our own and our children's
lives to the plague; for these we would rather intercede,
than for those, whose dreadful examples are capable
of infecting the minds of our children with infernal
maxims, and of rendering these provinces like Sodom
and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, first by involving
them in the guilt, and then in the fiery punishment of
those detestable cities.

Where the sword of the magistrate doth not punish,
that of divine vengeance will: but, as it would be
difficult for imagination to conceive the greatness of
the punishments that await such sinners, it is needless
to adduce the reasons of them. Our first notions of
God

S E R M. God are vindictive to such, and, as soon as we are convinced that there is a just God, the day appears in which, falling upon these unworthy men, he will address them in this thundering language: *Depart; depart into the source of your pleasures; depart into everlasting fire with all your associates; do for ever and ever what ye have been doing in your life-time; having exhausted my patience, experience the power of my anger; and as ye have had the dispositions of devils, suffer for ever the punishments prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Mat. xxv.
41.

II. A man may be in the disposition, of which the wise man speaks in the text, through stupidity and indolence, and this second state confounds the man with the *beast*. There is nothing hyperbolical in this proposition. What makes the difference between a man and a beast? These are the distinguishing characters of each. The one is confined to a short duration, and to a narrow circle of present objects; the other hath received of his Creator the power of going beyond time, and of penetrating by his mediation into remote futurity, yea even into an endless eternity. The one is actuated only by sensual appetites; the other hath the faculty of rectifying his senses by the ideas of his mind. The one is carried away by the heat of his temperament; the other hath the power of cooling temperament with reflection. The one knows no argument nor motive but sensation; the other hath the power of making motives of sensation yield to the more noble and permanent motives of interest. To imitate the first kind of these creatures is to live like a beast, to follow the second is to live like a man.

Let us apply this general truth to the particular subject in hand, and let us justify what we have advanced, that there is nothing hyperbolical in this proposition. If there be a subject that merits the attention of an intelligent soul, it is the long-suffering of God: And if there be a case, in which an intelligent creature ought to use the faculty, that his Creator hath given him

him, of going beyond the circle of present objects, of S E R M.
rectifying the actions of his senses by the ideas of his XI.
mind, and of correcting his temperament by reflection,
it is certainly the case of that sinner with whom God
hath borne so long.

Miserable man! ought he to say to himself, I have
committed, not only those sins, which ordinarily belong
to the frailty and depravity of mankind, but those
also which are a shame to human nature, and which
suppose that he who is guilty of them hath carried his
corruption to the highest pitch! O miserable man!
I have committed not only one of the sins, which, the
scripture saith, deprive those who commit them of 1 Cor. vi.
inheriting the kingdom of God, but I have lived many 10.
years in the practice of such sins; in the impurity of
effeminacy and adultery, in the possession of unjust
gain, in the gloomy revolutions of implacable hatred!
Miserable man! I have abused, not only the ordinary
means of conversion, but also those extraordinary means,
which God grants only to a few, and which he seems
to have displayed on purpose to shew how far a God
of love can carry his love! Miserable man! I was
not only engaged as a man and a professor of christi-
anity to give an example of piety, but I was also
engaged to do it as a minister, as a magistrate, as
a parent; yet, in spite of all my unworthiness, God
hath borne with me, and hath preserved me in this
world, not only while prosperity was universal, but
while calamities were almost general, while the sword
was glutting itself with blood, while the destroying
angel was exterminating on every side, as if he in-
tended to make the whole world one vast gravel! All
this time God hath been showering his blessings upon
me! upon me the chief of sinners! me his declared
enemy! blessings that he promised to bestow as pri-
vileges on his favourites only! *I dwell in the secret* Psa. xci.
place of the most High, I abode under the shadow of
the Almighty!

M m

I ask,

S E R M. I ask, my brethren, whether, if there be a state in
 XI. which an intelligent creature ought to meditate and
 reflect, it be not the state of this sinner? If I prove
 then, that there are men in this state, who neither think
 nor reflect, because they confine their attention to the
 circle of present objects, abandon themselves wholly to
 sensuality, and give themselves up entirely to their con-
 stitutional vices; shall I not have proved that there
 Rom. ii. are men, who like beasts are indifferent to *the riches of*
 4. *the forbearance and long-suffering of God?* But where
 shall we find such people? Shall we search for them in
 fabulous history, or look for them in ancient chroni-
 cles? Shall we quote the relations of those travellers,
 who seem to aim less at instructing us by publishing
 true accounts, than at astonishing us by reporting un-
 common events? Alas! alas! my dear brethren, I fear
 I have been too confident, and had not sufficiently pro-
 portioned my strength to my courage, when I engaged
 at the beginning of this discourse to confront certain
 portraits with the countenances of some of my hearers.
 But, no, the truth ought not to
 suffer through the frailty of him whose office it is to
 publish it.

Tell us then, what distinguisheth the man from the
 beast, in that worshipper of Mammon, who, having
 spent his life in amassing and hoarding up wealth, in
 taxing the widow, the orphan, and the ward, to satiate
 his avarice; having defrauded the state, deceived his
 correspondents, and betrayed his tenderest friends;
 having accumulated heaps upon heaps, and having
 only a few days respite, which Providence hath granted
 him for the repentance of his sins, and the restitution
 of his iniquitous gains; employs these last moments
 in offering incense to his idol, spend his last breath in
 enlarging his income, in lessening his expences, and in
 endeavouring to gratify that insatiable desire of getting
 which gnaws and devours him?

Tell us what distinguisheth the man from the beast, S E R M.
in that old debauchee, who thinks of nothing but vo- XI.
luptuousness; who to sensuality sacrificeth his time,
his fortune, his reputation, his health, his soul, his
salvation, along with all his pretensions to immortality;
and who would willingly comprehend the whole of man
in this definition, a being capable of wallowing in
voluptuousness?

Tell us what distinguisheth the man from the beast,
in that man, who, not being able to bear the remorse
of his own conscience, nor the idea of the vanity of this
world, to which he is wholly devoted; drowns his
reason in wine, gives himself up to all the excesses
of drunkenness, exposeth himself to the danger of com-
mitting some bloody murder, or of perishing by some
tragical death, of which we have too many melancholly
examples; not only unfits himself for repenting now,
but even renders himself incapable of repenting at all?
What is a penitent reconciliation to God? It includes, at
least, reflection and thought, the laying down of prin-
ciples and the deducing of consequences: but people of
this kind, through their excessive intoxication, generally
incapacitate themselves for inferring a consequence,
or admitting a principle, and even for reflecting and
thinking; as experience, experience superior to all our
reasoning, hath many a time shewn.

But is it necessary to reason in order to discover the
injustice of this disposition? Do ye really think that
God created you capable of reflection that ye should
never reflect? Do ye indeed believe that God gave you
so many fine faculties that ye should make no use of
these faculties? In a word, can ye seriously think that
God made you men in order to enable you to live like
beasts?

III. I said, in the third place, that the disposition,
of which the wise man speaks in the text, sometimes
proceeds from a principle of grave folly. So I call
the principle of some philosophers, who imagine that

S E R M. they find in the delay of the punishment of sinners;
 XI. an invincible argument against the existence of God; at least, against the infinity of his perfections.

We do not mean, by a philosopher, that superficial trifler, who, not having the least notion of right reasoning, takes the liberty sometimes of pretending to reason, and, with an air of superiority, which might impose on us were we to be imposed on by a tone, saith, *The learned maintain such an opinion: but I affirm the opposite opinion. Casuists advance such a maxim: but I lay down a very different maxim. Pastors bold such a system: but, for my part, I bold altogether another system.* And who is he who talks in this decisive tone, and who alone pretends to contradict all our ministers, and all our learned men; the whole church, and the whole school? It is sometimes a man, whose whole science consists in the casting up of a sum. It is sometimes a man, who hath spent all his life in exercises, that have not the least relation to the subject which he so arrogantly decides; and who thinks, if I may be allowed to say so, that arguments are to be commanded as he commands a regiment of soldiers. In a word, they are men, for the most part, who know neither what a system, nor a maxim is. Let not such people imagine that they are addressed as philosophers; for we cannot address them without repeating what hath been said in the preceding article, which is their proper place.

We mean, when we speak of men who despise the long-suffering of God as *philosophers*, people, who have taken as much pains to arrive at infidelity, as they ought to have taken to obtain the knowledge of the truth: who have studied as much to palliate error, as they ought to have studied to expose it: who have gone through as long a course of reading and meditation to deprave their hearts as they ought to have undertaken to preserve them from depravity. Among the sophisms which they have adopted, that, which they

they have derived from the delay of the punishment of sinners, hath appeared the most tenable, and they have occupied it as their fort. Sophisms of this kind are not new, they have been repeated in all ages, and in every age there have been such as Celi^{us}, (this is the name of an ancient atheist) of whom a heathen poet saith, *Celi^{us} says that there are no Gods, and that heaven is an uninhabited place*; and these are the chief reasons that he assigns; he continued happy, and he had the prospect of continuing so, while he denied the existence of God.

S E R M.
XI.

As the persons, to whom we address this article, profess to reason, let us reason with them. And ye, my brethren, endeavour to attend a few moments to our arguments. One chief cause of our erroneous notions of the perfections of God, is the considering of them separately, and not in their admirable assortment and beautiful harmony. When we meditate on the goodness of God, we consider his goodness alone and not in harmony with his justice. When we meditate on his justice, we consider it in an abstract view, and without any relation to his goodness. And in the same manner we consider his wisdom, his power, and his other attributes.

This restriction of meditation (I think I may venture to call it so) is a source of sophistry. If we consider supreme justice in this manner, it will seem as if it ought to exterminate every sinner: and, on the contrary, if we consider supreme goodness in this manner, it will seem as if it ought to spare every sinner; to succour all the afflicted; to prevent every degree of distress; and to gratify every wish of every creature capable of wishing. We might observe the same of power, and of wisdom, and of every other perfection of God. But what shocking consequences would follow such views of the divine attributes! As we should never be able to prove such a justice, or such a goodness, as we have imagined, we should be obliged to
infer,

S E R M. infer, that God is not a being supremely good; that
 XI, he is not a being supremely just; and the same may
 be said of his other perfections.

Persons, who entertain such notions, not only sink the Supreme Being below the dignity of his own nature, but even below that of mankind. Were we to allow the reasoning of these people, we should increase their difficulties by removing them, for the argument would end in downright atheism. Were we to allow the force of their objections, I say, we should increase their difficulties, and, instead of obtaining a solution of the difficulty which attends our notion of a divine attribute, we should obtain a proof that there is no God: for, could we prove that there is a being supremely good, in their abstract sense of goodness, we should thereby prove that there is no being supremely just; because supreme goodness, considered in their abstract manner, destroys supreme justice. The same may be said of all the other perfections of God, one perfection of the divine nature would destroy another, and to prove that God possessed one would be to prove that of the other his nature was quite destitute.

Now, if there be a subject, my brethren, in which people err by considering the perfections of God in a detached and abstract manner, it is this of which we are speaking; it is when people raise objections against the attributes of God from his forbearance with sinners. God seems to act contrary to some of his perfections in his forbearance. Why? Because the perfection, to which his conduct seems incongruous, is considered as if it were alone, and not as if it were in relation to another perfection: because, as I have already said, the divine attributes are considered abstractly and not in their beautiful assortment and admirable harmony.

I confine myself to this principle to refute the objections which some, who are improperly called philosophers, derive from the delay of the punishment of sinners, to oppose to the perfections of God. I do not,
 however,

however, confine myself to this for want of other solid S E R M 7
answers: for example, I might prove that the notion, XI.
which they form of those perfections, to which the
delay of divine vengeance seems repugnant, is a false
notion.

What are those perfections of God? They are, ye
answer, *truth*, which is interested in executing the
threatnings that are denounced against sinners: *wisdom*,
which is interested in supplying means of re-establish-
ing order: and particularly *justice*, which is interested
in the punishing of the guilty.

I reply, your idea of truth is opposite to truth: your
idea of wisdom is opposite to wisdom: your idea of
justice is opposite to justice.

Yes, the notion, that ye entertain of *truth*, is oppo-
site to truth, and ye resemble those *scoffers*, of whom
the apostle speaks, who said, *Where is the promise of his* Pet. iii.
coming? What Jesus Christ had said of S. John, *If I 4.*
will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? had John xxi.
occasioned a rumor concerning the near approach of
the dissolution of the world: but there was no ap-
pearance of the dissolution of the world: thence the
scoffers, of whom S. Peter speaks, concluded that God
had not fulfilled his promise, and on this false suppo-
sition they said, *Where is the promise of his coming?*
Apply this reflection to yourselves. The delay of the
punishment of sinners, ye say, is opposite to the truth
of God: on the contrary, God hath declared that he
would not punish every sinner as soon as he had com-
mitted an act of sin. *The sinner doeth evil an hundred*
times, and God prolongeth his days.

The delay of the punishment of sinners, ye say, is
opposite to the *wisdom* of God: on the contrary, it is
this delay, which provides for the execution of that
wise plan, which God hath made for mankind, of
placing them for some time in a state of probation in
this world, and of regulating their future reward or
punishment according to their use or abuse of such a
dispensation.

The

SERM. The delay of the punishment of sinners, ye say, is
XI. repugnant to the *justice* of God. Quite the contrary.
 What do ye call justice in God? What? Such an
 impetuous emotion as that which animates you against
 those who affront you, and whom ye consider as ene-
 mies? An implacable madness, which enrageth you
 to such a degree that a sight of all the miseries into
 which ye are going to involve them is not able to curb?
 Is this what ye call justice?

But I suppress all these reflections, and return to my
 principle, (and this is not the first time that we have been
 obliged to proportion the length of a discourse, not to
 the nature of the subject, but to the impatience of our
 hearers.) I return to my principle; the delay of the
 punishment of sinners will not seem incompatible with
 the justice of God unless ye consider that perfection
 detached from another perfection, by which God in
 the most eminent manner displays his glory, I mean his
 mercy. An explication of the last clause of our text,
the sinner doth evil an hundred times, and God prolongeth
his days, will place the matter in a clear light: for the
 long-suffering of God with sinners flows from his
 mercy. S. Peter confirms this when he tells us, *The*
2 Pet. iii. *Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is long-suffering*
9. *to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all*
should come to repentance.

It is with the same view that Jesus Christ calls the
 whole time, during which God delayed the destruction
Luke xix. of Jerusalem, *the time of the visitation* of that miserable
44. city. And for the same reason S. Paul calls the whole
 time, which God puts between the commission
Rom. ii. 4. of sin and the destruction of sinners, *riches of for-*
bearance, and long-suffering, that lead to repentance. And
 who could flatter himself with the hope of escaping
Isa. xxxiii. *devouring fire, and everlasting burnings,* were God to
34. execute immediately his sentence against evil works,
 and to make punishment instantly follow the practice
 of sin?

What

What would have become of David, if divine mercy S E R M. XI. had not *prolonged his days* after he had fallen into the crimes of adultery and murder; or if justice had called him to give an account of his conduct, while his heart, burning with a criminal passion, was wishing only to gratify it; while he was sacrificing the honour of a wife, the life of a husband, along with his own body, which should have been a temple of the Holy Ghost, to the criminal passion that inflamed his soul? It was the long-suffering, the patience of God, that gave him time to recover himself, to get rid of his infatuation, to see the horror of his sin, and to say under a sense of it, *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* Ps. li. 1, 2, 3, 4.

What would have become of Manasseh, if God had called him to give an account of his administration while he was making the house of God the theatre of his dissoluteness and idolatry; while he was *planting groves, rearing up altars for the host of heaven, making his sons pass through the fire, doing more wickedly than the Amorites, making Judah to sin with his dungbill gods,* as the holy scripture calls them? 2 Kings xxi. 3. 6. 11. It was the long-suffering of God that bore with him, that engaged him to humble himself, to pray fervently to the God of his fathers, and to become an exemplary convert, after he had been an example of infidelity and impurity.

What would have become of S. Peter, if God had called him to give an account of himself, while, frightened and subverted at the sight of the judges and executioners of his saviour, he was pronouncing those cowardly words, *I know not the man?* It was the long-suffering and patience of God, that gave him an Mat. xxvi. 74.

S E R M. opportunity of seeing the merciful looks of Jesus
 XI. Christ immediately after his denial of him, of fleeing
 from a place fatal to his innocence, of going out to
 weep bitterly, and of saying to Jesus Christ, *Lord,*
 John xxi. *thou knowest that I love thee: Lord, thou knowest all*
 16, 17. *things, thou knowest that I love thee.*

What would have become of S. Paul, if God had
 required an account of his administration, while he
 was *breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the*
 Acts ix. 1. *disciples of the Lord*, while he was ambitious of stifling
 the new born church in her cradle, while he was solli-
 citing letters from the high priest to pervert and to
 punish the disciples of Christ? It was the long-suf-
 6. *fering of God, that gave him an opportunity of saying,*
Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? It was the pa-
 tience of God, which gave him an opportunity of
 1 Tim. i. making that honest confession, *I was before a blasphemer,*
 13. *and a persecutor, and injurious: But I obtained mercy.*

IV. But why should we go out of this assembly,
 (and here we enter into the last article, and shall en-
 deavour to prevent your abuse of the patience of God
 in the dispositions of *men.*) why should we go out
 of this assembly, to search after proofs of divine mercy
 in a delay of punishment? What would have become
 of you, my dear hearers, if vengeance had immediately
 followed sin; if God had not *prolonged the days of sin-*
ners; if *sentence against evil works had been executed*
speedily?

What would have become of some of you, if God
 had required of you an account of your conduct, while
 ye were sacrificing the rights of widows and orphans
 Lev. xix. to the *honour of the persons of the mighty*; while ye were
 15. practising perjury and accepting bribes? It is the
 long-suffering of God that *prolongs your days*, that
 ye may make a restitution of your unrighteous gain,
 plead for the orphan and the widow, and attend in
 future decisions only to the nature of the cause be-
 fore you.

What

What would have become of some of you, if God S E R M.
had called you to give an account of your conduct, XI.
while the fear of persecution, or, what is infinitely more
criminal still, while the love of ease, prevailed over
you to renounce a religion which ye respected in your
hearts while ye denied with your mouths? It is the
patience of God, which hath afforded you time to learn
the greatness of a sin, the guilt of which a whole life of
repentance is not sufficient to expiate: it is the pa-
tience of God, which hath *prolonged your days*, that ye
might confess that Jesus whom ye have betrayed, and
profess that gospel which ye have denied.

Let us not multiply particular examples, let us
comprise this whole assembly in one class. There is
not one of our hearers, no, not one, who is in this
church to day, there is not one who hath been engaged
in the devotional exercises of this day, who would not
have been in hell with the devil and his angels, if ven-
geance had immediately followed sin; if God had
exercised no patience toward sinners; if *sentence against*
evil works had been *executed speedily*. *It is of the Lord's* Lam. iii.
mercies that we are not consumed! The delay of punish-
ment is a demonstration of his mercy; it doth not
prove that he is not just, but it doth prove that he is
good. 22.

I could wish, my brethren, that all those, who ought
to interest themselves in this article, would render it
needless for me to enter into particulars, by recollecting
the history of their own lives, and by remembering the
circumstances to which I refer. One man ought to
say to himself; In my childhood, an upright father, a
pious mother, and several worthy tutors did all that
lay in their power to form me virtuous. In my
youth, a tender and generous friend, who was more
concerned for my happiness, and more ambitious of
my excelling, than I myself, availed himself of all the
power of insinuation that nature had given him to
incline my heart to piety and to the fear of God, and

S E R M. to attach me to religion by *bands of love*. On a certain
 XI. occasion, Providence put into my hands a religious book, the reading of which discovered to me the turpitude of my conduct. At another time, one of those clear, affecting, thundering sermons, that alarm sleepy souls, forced from me a promise of repentance and reformation. One day, I saw the administration of the Lord's supper, which, awaking my attention to the grand sacrifice that divine justice required for the sins of mankind, affected me in a manner so powerful and moving, that I thought myself obliged in gratitude to dedicate my whole life to him, who in the tenderest compassion had given himself for me. Another time, an extremely painful illness shewed me the absurdity of my course of life; filled me with a keenness of remorse, that seemed an anticipation of hell; put me on beseeching God to grant me a few years more of his patience; and brought me to a solemn adjuration that I would employ the remaining part of my life in repairing the past. All these have been fruitless; all these means have been useless; all these promises have been false; and yet I may have access to a throne of grace. What love! What mercy!

This long-suffering of God with impenitent sinners will be one of the most terrible subjects that they can think of when the avenging moment comes; when the fatal hour arrives in which the voice of divine justice shall summon a miserable wretch to appear, when it shall bind him to a death bed, and suspend him over the abyss of hell.

But to a poor sinner, who is awaking from his sin, who, having consumed the greatest part of his life in sin, would repair it by sacrificing the world and all its glory, were such a sacrifice in his power: to a poor sinner, who, having been for some time afraid of an exclusion from the mercy of God, revolves these distressing thoughts in his mind, Perhaps *the days of my visitation* may be at an end; henceforth perhaps my
 sorrows

sorrows may be superfluous, and my tears inadmissible: S E R M.
to such a sinner, what an object, what a comfortable XI.
object, is the treasure of *the forbearance and long-suffer-*
ing of God that leadeth to repentance. My God, saith
such a sinner, *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies!* Gen. xxxii
My God, I am tempted to think that to doubt of my 10.
interest in thy favour is the rendering of a proper
homage to thy mercy, and my unbelief would arise
from my veneration for thy majesty! But let me not
think so; I will not doubt of thy mercy, my God;
since thou hast condescended to assure me of it in such
a tender manner! I will lose myself in that ocean of
love which thou, O God infinitely good! still dis-
coverest to me, I will persuade myself that thou dost
not despise the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart,
and this persuasion I will oppose to an alarmed con-
science, to a fear of hell that anticipates the misery of
the state, and to all those formidable executioners of con-
demned men, whom I behold ready to seize their prey!

My brethren, *the riches of the goodness and forbearance,*
and long-suffering of God, are yet open to you: they are
open, my dear brethren, to this church, how ungrate-
ful soever we have been to the goodness of God; how
much insensibility soever we have shewn to the invi-
tations of grace: they are open to the greatest sinners,
nor is there one of my hearers who may not be
admitted to these inexhaustible treasures of goodness
and mercy.

But do ye still *despise the riches of the long-suffering of*
God? What! because *a space to repent* is given, will Rev. ii. 21.
ye continue in impenitence? Ah! were Jesus Christ
in the flesh, were he walking in your streets, were he
now in this pulpit preaching to you, would he not
preach to you all bathed in sorrows and tears? He
would weep over you as he once wept over Jerusalem,
and he would say to this province, to this town, to this
church, to each person in this assembly, yea to that
wicked hearer, who affects not to be concerned in this
sermon,

S E R M. sermon, O that *thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!*

XI. Luke xix. What am I saying? he would say thus! He doth say thus, my dear brethren, and still interests himself in your salvation in the tenderest and most vehement manner. Sitting at the right hand of his father, he holds back that avenging arm which is ready to fell us to the earth at a stroke; in our behalf he interposeth his sufferings and his death, his intercession and his cross; and from the top of that glory to which he is elevated he looks down and saith to this republic, to this church, to all this assembly, and to every sinner in it: O that *thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!*

My brethren, the patience of God, which yet endures, will not always endure. The year, which the master of the vineyard grants, at the intercession of *the dresser*, to try whether a barren fig-tree can be made fruitful, will expire, and then it must be *cut down*. Do not deceive yourselves, my brethren, the long-suffering of God must produce in the end either your conversion or your destruction. O may it prevent your destruction by producing your conversion! The Lord grant you this favour! To him, the father, the son, and the holy spirit, be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

Luke xiii.
6.

S E R M O N XII.

God the only Object of FEAR.

P A R T I.

S E R M O N XII.

GOD the only Object of FEAR.

P A R T I.

• This Sermon is divided into two parts, on account of its length.

VOL. I.

S E R M O N

God the only Object of Fear.

P A R T I

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S E R M O N XII.

G O D the only Object of F E A R.

P A R T I.

J E R E M I A H x. 7.

*Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? For so
thee doth it appertain.*

THE prophet aims, in the words of the text, to
inspire us with fear, and the best way to under-
stand his meaning is to affix distinct ideas to the term.
To fear God is an equivocal phrase in all languages; it is
generally used in three senses in the holy scriptures.

I. Fear sometimes signifies terror; a disposition,
that makes the soul consider itself only as sinful, and
God chiefly as a being who hateth and avengeth sin.
There are various degrees of this fear, and it deserves
either praise, or blame, according to the different de-
gree to which it is carried.

A man, whose heart is so void of the knowledge of
the perfections of God, that he cannot rise above the
little idols which worldlings adore; whose notions are
so gross, that he cannot adhere to the purity of religion
for purity's sake; whose taste is so vitiated that he hath
no relish for the delightful union of a faithful soul with
its God; such a man deserves to be praised, when he
endeavourereth to restrain his sensuality by the idea of
an avenging God. The apostles urged this motive

S E R M. with success, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we

XII. persuade men. Of some have compassion, saith S. Jude to
 2 Cor. v. the ministers of the gospel, making a difference; and
 11. others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire. Such
 Ver. 22, 23.

a disposition is, without doubt, very imperfect, and were a man to expect salvation in this way, he would be in imminent danger of feeling those miseries, of which he is afraid. No casuists, except such as have been educated in an infernal school, will venture to affirm, that to fear God in this sense, without loving him, is sufficient for salvation. Nevertheless, this disposition is allowable in the beginning of a work of conversion, it is never altogether useless to a regenerate man, and it is of singular use to him in some violent temptations, with which the enemy of his salvation assaults him. When a tide of depravity threatens, in spite of yourselves, to carry you away, recollect some of the titles of God; the scripture calls him, *the mighty, and the terrible God; the furious Lord, a consuming fire.* Remember the terrors, that your own consciences felt, when they first awoke from the enchantment of sin, and when they beheld, for the first time, vice in its own colours. Meditate on that dreadful abode, in which criminals suffer everlasting pains for momentary pleasures. *The fear of God, taken in this first sense, is a laudable disposition.*

Neh. ix.

32.

Nah. i. 2.

Heb. xii.

29.

But it ceaseth to be laudable, it becomes detestable, when it goeth so far as to deprive a sinner of a sight of all the gracious remedies, which God hath reserved for sinners. *I heard thy voice, and I was afraid, and I hid myself,* said the first man, after his fall: but it was

Gen. iii.

10.

because he was naked, it was because he had lost the glory of his primitive innocence, and must be obliged to prostrate himself before his God, to seek from his infinite mercy the proper remedies for his maladies, to pray to him, in whose image he had been first formed, to renew him after the image of him that created him, and to ask him for habits, that the shame of his nakedness

Gen. i. 26.

Col. iii. 10.

Rev. iii.

12.

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might not appear. Despair should not dwell in the church, hell should be its only abode. It should be left to the devils to believe and tremble. Time is an æconomy of hope, and only those, whom the day of wrath overwhelmeth with horrible judgments, have reason to cry to the mountains and rocks, *Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb.* Too great a degree of fear, then, in this first sense of fear, is a detestable disposition.

Fear is no less odious, when it giveth us tragical descriptions of the rights of God, and of his designs on his creatures: when it maketh a tyrant of him, whom the text calleth *the king of nations*; of him, who is elsewhere described as having on his thigh the stately title of KING OF KINGS; of him, whose dominion is described as constituting the felicity of his subjects, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.* Far be such descriptions of God from us! They represent the deity as a merciless usurer, who requireth an account of talents that we have not received; who requireth angelical knowledge of a human intelligence, or philosophical penetration of an uninstructed peasant. Far from us be those systems, which pretend to prove, that God will judge the heathens by the same laws by which he will judge the Jews, and that he will judge those, who lived under the law, as if they had lived under the gospel! Away with that fear of God, which is so injurious to his majesty, and so unworthy of that throne, which is founded on equity! What encouragement could I have to endeavour to know what God hath been pleased to reveal to mankind, were I prepossessed with an opinion, that, after I had implored, with all the powers of my soul, the help of God to guide me in seeking the truth; after I had laid aside the prejudices that disguise it; after I had suspended, as far as I could, the passions that deprave my understanding; even after I had determined to sacrifice my rest, my fortune, my dignity, my life, to follow

S E R M. it; I might fall into capital errors which would plunge me into everlasting woe? No, no, we have not so learned

XII. Eph. iv. 20. *Christ.* None but a refractory servant fears God in this manner. It is only the refractory servant, who, to exculpate himself for neglecting what was in his power,

Mat. xxv. 24. pretends to have thought that God would require more than was in his power: *Lord, saith he, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strowed. I knew!* And where didst thou learn this? What infernal body of divinity hast thou studied? What demon was thy

26. tutor? Ah! Thou art a wicked servant, and, at the same time, a slothful servant; slothful, not to form the just and noble resolution of improving the talent that I committed to thee: wicked, to invent such an odious reason, and to represent me in such dismal colours.

27. *Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and then I should have received mine own with usury.* Thou oughtest to have improved that ray of light, with which I had enlightened thee, and not to have forged an ideal God, who would require that with which he had not intrusted thee. Thou oughtest to have read the books, that my providence put into thy hands, and not to have imagined that I would condemn thee for not having read those which were concealed from thee. Thou oughtest to have consulted those ministers, whom I had set in my church, and not to have feared that I would condemn thee for not having sitted in conference with angels and seraphims, with whom thou hadst no intercourse. Thou hadst but one talent: thou oughtest to have improved that one talent, and not to have neglected it lest I should require four of thee. *Thou wicked servant! Thou slothful servant! Take the*

28. *talent from him. Give it unto him who hath ten talents.*

These are the different ideas, which we ought to form, of that disposition of mind which is called fear in this first sense. To fear God in this sense is to have the soul filled with horror at the sight of his judgments.

2. To fear God is a phrase still more equivocal, and S E R M.
 it is put for that disposition of mind, which inclines us XII.
 to render to him all the worship that he requires, to
 submit to all the laws that he imposeth, to conceive all
 the emotions of admiration, devotedness, and love;
 which the eminence of his perfections demand. This
 is the usual meaning of the phrase. By this Jonah
 described himself, even while he was acting contrary
 to it, *I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord the God of* i. 9.
heaven. In this sense the phrase is to be understood
 when we are told that *the fear of the Lord, prolongeth* Prov. x,
days, is a fountain of life, and preserveth from the snares of 27.
death. And it is to be taken in the same sense where xiv. 27.
the fear of the Lord is said to be the beginning of wisdom. Pl. cxi. 10.
 The fear of the Lord in all these passages includes
 all the duties of religion. The last quoted passage
 is quite mistaken, when the *fear* that is spoken of is
 taken for terror: and a conclusion is drawn from false
 premises when it is inferred from this passage that fear
 is not sufficient for salvation. This false reasoning,
 however, may be found in some systems of morality.
 Terror, say they, may, indeed, make a part of a course
 of wisdom, but it is only the beginning of it, as it is
 said, *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*: but,
 neither does *fear* signify terror in this passage, nor does
the beginning mean a priority of time; it means the
 principal point. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning*
of wisdom; that is, the principal point; that without
 which no man is truly wise, that is, obedience to the
 laws of religion, agreeably to the saying of the wise
 man, *Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is* Ecl. xii.
the whole of man. 13.

It seems needless to remark what idea we ought to
 form of this fear: for, it is plain, the more a soul is
 penetrated with it, the nearer it approacheth to perfec-
 tion. It seems equally unnecessary to prove that terror
 is a very different disposition from this fear: for, on
 the contrary, the most effectual mean of not fearing
 God

SERMON, God in the first sense is to fear him in the last. *Fear*
 XII. *not*, said Moses formerly, *for God is come to prove you,*
 Exod. xx *that his fear may be before your faces. Fear not, that ye*
 20. *may fear; this is only a seeming contradiction: The*
only way to prevent fear, that is, horror, on account of
the judgments of God, is to have his fear before your
eyes, that is, such a love, and such a deference for him,
as religion requires. Agreeably to this, it is elsewhere
said, perfect love, (and perfect love, in this passage, is
nothing but the fear of which I am speaking) perfect
love casteth out fear; that is, a horror on account of
God's judgments: for the more love we have for him,
the stronger assurance shall we enjoy, that his judgments
have nothing in them dangerous to us.

3. But, beside these two notions of fear, there is a
 third, which is more nearly allied to our text, a notion
 that is neither so general as the last, nor so particular
 as the first. Fear, in this third sense, is a disposition,
 which considers him who is the object of it as alone
 possessing all that can contribute to our happiness or
 misery. Distinguish here a particular from a general
 happiness. Every being around us, by a wise disposal
 of Providence, hath some degree of power to favour,
 or to hinder, a particular happiness. Every thing that
 can increase, or abate, the motion of our bodies, may
 contribute to the advancement, or to the diminution,
 of the particular happiness of our bodies. Every thing
 that can elucidate, or obscure, the ideas of our minds,
 may contribute to the particular happiness, or misery
 of our minds. Every thing that can procure to our
 souls either a sensation of pleasure, or a sensation of pain,
 may contribute to the particular happiness, or misery of
 our souls. But it is neither a particular happiness, nor
 a particular misery, that we mean to treat of now: We
 mean a general happiness. It often happens, that, all
 things being considered, a particular happiness, consi-
 dered in the whole of our felicity, is a general misery:
 and, on the contrary, it often happens, that, all things
 being

being considered, a particular misery, in the whole of SERM.
 our felicity, is a general happiness. It was a particular XII.
 misfortune in the life of a man to be forced to bear
 the amputation of a mortified arm: but, weighing the
 whole felicity of the life of the man, this particular
 misfortune became a good, because, had he not con-
 sented to the amputation of the mortified limb, the
 mortification would have been fatal to his life, and
 would have deprived him of all felicity here. It was a
 particular calamity, that a believer should be called to
 suffer martyrdom: but, in the whole felicity of that
 believer, martyrdom was a happiness, yea an inestimable
 happiness: by suffering the pain of a few moments he
 hath escaped those eternal torments which would have
 attended his apostacy; the bearing of a *light affliction*, 2 Cor. iv.
which was but for a moment, hath wrought out a far more 17.
exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Let us sum up these reflections. To consider a
 being as capable of rendering us happy or miserable,
 in the general sense that we have given of the words
 happiness and misery, is to fear that being, in the third
 sense which we have given to the term *fear*. This is
 the sense of the word *fear*, in the text, and in many
 other passages of the holy scriptures. Thus Isaiah
 useth it, *Say ye not a confederacy, to all them to whom this* viii. 12, 13.
people shall say a confederacy: neither fear ye their fear,
nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let
him be your fear, and let him be your dread. So again,
Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that li. 16.
shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass?
 And again in these well-known words of our saviour,
fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill Mat. x. 28.
the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both
soul and body in hell. To kill the body is to cause a par-
 ticular evil; and to fear them which kill the body is to
 regard the death of the body as a general evil, deter-
 mining the whole of our felicity. To fear him which
 is able to destroy the soul, is to consider the loss of the soul
 as

SER. M. as the general evil, and him who is able to destroy the
 XII. soul as alone able to determine the whole of our felicity
 or misery. In this sense we understand the text, and
 this sense seems most agreeable to the scope of the
 place.

The prophet was endeavouring to abase false gods
 in the eyes of his countrymen, while the true God was
 suffering their worshippers to carry his people into
 captivity. He was aiming to excite the Jews to wor-
 ship the God of heaven and earth, and to despise idols
 even amidst the trophies and the triumphs of idolaters.
 He was trying to convince them fully that idols could
 procure neither happiness nor misery to mankind; and
 that, if their worshippers should inflict any punishments
 on the captives, they would be only particular evils

V. 2, &c.

permitted by the providence of God: *Be not dismayed
 at the signs of heaven because the heathen are dismayed at
 them. One cutteth a tree out of the forest with the ax to
 make idols; another decks them with silver and with
 gold, and fastens them with nails and with hammers that
 they move not. They are upright as the palm-tree, but
 speak not. They must needs be borne, because they cannot
 go. Be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither
 also is it in them to do good.* Remark here the double
 motive of not fearing them: on the one hand, they can-
 not do evil; on the other, neither is it in them to do good.

This justifies the idea, that we give you of fear, by
 representing it as that disposition, which considers its
 object as having our happiness and our misery in its
 power. Instead of fearing that they should destroy you,
 announce ye their destruction, and say unto them, in the
 language of the Babylonians who worship them, * the

Ver. 11.

*Gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, even
 they shall perish from the earth, and from under these hea-
 vens.* Having thus shewn that heathen gods could not
 be the object of that fear, which considereth a being as
 able to procure happiness and misery; the prophet
 represents

* These words are in the Chaldean language in the original.

represents the God of Israel as alone worthy of such an homage, *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.* When he uttereth his voice there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Molten images are falshood and vanity. The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of hosts is his name. The prophet, his own mind being filled with these noble ideas, supposes that every other mind is filled with them too; and in an ecstasy exclaims, *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain!*

Fear, then, taken in this third sense, is an homage that cannot be paid to a creature without falling into idolatry. To regard a being, as capable of determining the happiness, or misery, of an immortal soul, is to pay the honours of adoration to him. As it can be said of none but God, *It is my happiness to draw near to him: so of him alone can it be truly said, it is my misery to depart from him.* Moreover, this homage belongeth to him in a complete and eminent manner. He possesseth all without restriction that can contribute to our felicity, or to our misery. Three ideas, under which we are going to consider God, will prove what we have affirmed.

I. God is a being, whose will is self-efficient.

II. God is the only being, who can act immediately on spiritual souls.

III. God is the only being, who can make all creatures concur with his designs. From these three notions of God follows this consequence, *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?*

I. God is a being, whose will is self-efficient. We call that will self-efficient, which infallibly produceth its effect. By this efficiency of will we distinguish God

S E R M. from every other being, either real, or possible. No

XII. one but God hath a self-efficient will. There is no one but God of whom the argument from the will to the act is demonstrative. Of none but God can we reason in this manner: he willeth, therefore he doth. Every intelligent being hath some degree of efficiency in his will; my will hath an efficiency on my arm; I will to move my arm, my arm instantly moves. But there is as great a difference between the efficiency of the will of a creature, and the efficiency of the will of the Creator, as there is between a finite and an infinite being. The will of a created intelligence, properly speaking, is not self-efficient, for it hath only a borrowed efficiency. When he, from whom it is derived, restrains it, this created intelligence will have only a vain, weak, inefficient will. I have to day a will efficient to move my arm: but if that Being, from whom I derive this will, should contract, or relax, the fibres of this arm, my will to move it would become vain, weak, and inefficient. I have a will efficient on the whole mass of this body, to which it hath pleased the creator to unite my immortal soul: but were God to dissolve the bond, by which he hath united these two parts of me together, all that I might then will in regard to this body would be vain, weak, and destitute of any effect. When the intelligence, who united my soul to my body, shall have once pronounced the word

Pf. xc. 3. *return*, that portion of matter to which my soul was united will be as free from the power of my will as the matter that constitutes the body of the sun, or as that which constitutes bodies, to which neither my senses, nor my imagination, can attain. All this comes to pass, because the efficiency of a creature is a borrowed efficiency, whereas that of the creator is self-efficient and underived.

Farther, the efficiency of a creature's will is finite. My will is efficient in regard to the portion of matter to which I am united: but how contracted is my empire!

pire! how limited is my sovereignty! It extends no farther than the mass of my body extends; and the mass of my body is only a few inches broad, and a few cubits high. What if those mortals, who are called kings, monarchs, emperors, could by foreign aid extend the efficiency of their wills to the most distant places; what if they were able to extend it to the extremities of this planet, which we inhabit; how little a way, after all, is it to the extremities of this planet? What if, by the power of sulphur and saltpetre, these men extend the efficiency of their wills to a little height in the air; how low, after all, is that height? Were a sovereign to unite every degree of power, that he could procure, to extend his efficiency to the nearest planet, all his efforts would be useless. The efficiency of a creature's will is finite, as well as borrowed: that of the Creator is independent and universal; it extends to the most remote beings, as well as to those that surround us, it extends alike to all actual and to all possible beings. My brethren, are ye stricken with this idea? Do ye perceive its relation to our subject? *Who would not fear thee, O king of nations?*

Our low and groveling minds, low and groveling as they are, have yet some notion of the grand and the marvellous; and nothing can impede, nothing can limit, nothing can equal our notion of it: when we give it scope it presently gets beyond every thing that we see, and every thing that exists. Reality is not sufficient, fancy must be indulged; real existences are too indigent, possible beings must be imagined; and we presently quit the real to range through the ideal world. Hence come poetical fictions, and fabulous narrations, and hence marvellous adventures, and romantic enchantments. A man is, assuredly, an object of great pity, when he pleaseth himself with such fantastic notions. But, the principle, that occasioned these fictions, ought to render the mind of man respectable: it is the very principle, which we have mentioned.

S E R M. tioned. It is because the idea, that the mind of man
 XII. hath of the grand and the marvellous, finds nothing
 to impede, nothing to limit, nothing to equal it. The
 most able architect cannot fully gratify this idea, al-
 though he employ his genius, his materials, and his
 artists, to erect a superb and regular edifice in a few
 years. All this is far below the notion which we
 have of the grand and the marvellous. Our mind
 imagines an inchanter, who, uniting in an instant all
 the secrets of art, and all the wonders of nature, by a
 single word of his mouth, or by a single act of his
 will, produceth a house, a palace, or a city. The
 most able mechanic cannot fully gratify this idea, al-
 though with a marvellous industry he build a vessel,
 which, resisting winds and waves, passeth from the east
 to the west, and discovereth new worlds, which nature
 seemed to have forbidden us to approach, by the im-
 mense spaces that it had placed between us. Our
 mind fancies an enchantment, which, giving to a body
 naturally ponderous the levity of air, the activity of
 fire, the agility of flame, or of ethereal matter, passeth
 the most immeasurable spaces with a rapidity swifter
 than that of lightning. It is God, it is God alone, my
 brethren, who is the original of these ideas. God only
 possesseth that which gratifies and absorbs our idea of
 the grand and the marvellous. The extravagance of
 fable does not lie in the imagining of these things; but
 in the misapplication of them. Must an edifice be
 formed by a single act of the will? In God we find
 the reality of this idea. He forms, not only a pa-
 lace, a city, or a kingdom: but a whole world by a
 single act of his will; because his will is always ef-
 ficient, and always produceth its effect. *God said, Let*
there be light, and there was light. He spake and it was
done: he commanded and it stood fast. Must the im-
 mense distances of the world be passed in an instant?
 In God we find the reality of this idea. What am I
 saying? we find more than this in God. He doth not
 pass

Gen. i. 3.

Ps. xxxiii.

9.

pass through the spaces that separate the heavens from the earth, he fills them with the immensity of his essence. *Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee! Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, saith the Lord.*

S E R M.

XII.

1 Kings
viii. 27.

Isa. lxvi.

1, 2.

Were it necessary to prove that this idea is not a freak of our fancy, but that it ariseth from an original which really exists: I would divide, the better to prove my proposition, my opponents into two classes. The first should consist of those who already admit the existence of a perfect Being: To them I could easily prove that efficiency of will is a perfection, and that we cannot conceive a Being perfect, who doth not possess this perfection. It is essential to the perfection of a Being, that we should be able to say of him, *Who hath resisted his will?* Could any other being resist his will, that being would be free from his dominion; and would subsist, not only independently on him, but even in spite of him: and then we could conceive a being more perfect than him, that is, a being from whose dominion nothing could free itself.

Rom. ix.
19.

In the second class I would place those who deny the existence of a supreme Being; and to them I would prove that the existence of beings, who have a derived efficiency of will, proves the existence of a Being whose will is self-efficient. Whence have finite beings derived that limited efficiency, which they possess, if not from a self-efficient Being, who hath distributed portions of efficiency among subordinate beings?

But it is less needful to prove that there is a Being who hath such a perfection; than it is to prove, that he who possesseth it merits, and alone merits, such a fear as we have described: that he deserves, and that he alone deserves to be considered as having our felicity, and our misery, in his power. *Who would not fear*

S E R M. *fear thee, O king of nations? to thee doth it not appertain?* And who would not consider thee as the only object of this fear? To whom beside doth it appertain? The efficiency of a creature's will proceeds from thee, and as it proceeds from thee alone, by thee alone does it subsist: one act of thy will gave it existence, and one act of thy will can take that existence away! The most formidable creatures are only terrible through the exercise of a small portion of efficiency derived from thee; thou art the source, the soul, of all! Pronounce the sentence of my misery, and I shall be miserable: pronounce that of my felicity, and I shall be happy: nor shall any thing be able to disconcert a happiness, that is maintained by an efficient will, which is superior to all opposition: before which all is nothing, or rather, which is itself all in all, because its efficiency communicates efficiency to all! *Who would not fear thee O king of nations? Doth not fear appertain to thee alone?*

Perhaps the proving of a self-efficient will may be more than is necessary to the exhibiting of an object of human fear. Must such a grand spring move to destroy such a contemptible creature as man? He is only a vapour, a particle of air is sufficient to dissipate it: he is only a flower, a blast of wind is sufficient to make it fade. This is undeniable in regard to the material and visible man, in which we too often place all our glory. It is not only, then, to the infinite God, it is not only to him whose will is self-efficient, that man owes the homage of fear: it may be said that he owes it, in a sense, to all those creatures, to which Providence hath given a presidency over his happiness or his misery. He ought not only to say, *Who would not fear thee O king of nations? for to thee doth it appertain!* But he ought also to say, *Who would not fear thee, O particle of air? Who would not fear thee, O blast of wind? Who would not fear thee, O crushing of a moth?* Because there needs only a particle of air, there needs

needs only a puff of wind, there needs only the *crushing* S E R M.
of a moth, to subvert his happiness, and to destroy his XII.
life. But ye would entertain very different notions of
human happiness and misery, were ye to consider man
in a nobler light; and to attend to our second notion
of God, as an object of fear.

S E R.

S E R M O N XII.

GOD the only Object of FEAR.

P A R T II.

S. E. R. M. O. N. XII.

God the only Object of Fear.

T A R T H.

PO

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S E R M O N XII.

G O D the only Object of F E A R.

P A R T II.

JEREMIAH X. 7.

Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? For to thee doth it appertain.

II. **G**OD is the only being who hath a supreme dominion over the operations of a spiritual and immortal soul. The discussion of this article would lead us into observations too abstract for this place; and therefore we make it a law to abridge our reflections. We must beg leave to remark, however, that we ought to think so highly of the nature of man as to admit this principle: God alone is able to exercise an absolute dominion over a spiritual and immortal soul. From this principle we conclude, that God alone hath the happiness and misery of man in his power. God alone merits the supreme homage of fear. God alone, not only in opposition to all the imaginary gods of paganism, but also in opposition to every being that really exists, is worthy of this part of the adoration of a spiritual and immortal creature. *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?*

Weigh the emphatical words, which we just now quoted, *Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?* Who art thou, immaterial spirit,

S E R M. that thou shouldst be afraid of a man? Who art thou,
 XII. *immortal spirit*, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man
 that shall die?

Who art thou, *immaterial spirit*, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man? Man hath no immediate power over a spirit; he can affect it only by means of body. It is only by the body that a tyrant can cause a little anguish in the soul. It is only by the body as a mean that he can flatter some of the propensities of the soul, and propose himself to it as an object of its hope and fear. But, beside that this power is infinitely small while the soul is subject to it; beside that the soul is capable of a thousand pleasures and a thousand pains, during its union to the body, which man cannot excite; beside these advantages, it is beyond a doubt, that this power of a tyrant can endure no longer than the union of the soul to the body doth, by the mean of which the tyrant affects it. If a tyrant exercise his power to a certain degree, he loseth it. When he has carried to a certain degree that violent motion, which he produceth in the body in order to afflict the soul, which is united to it, he breaks the bond that unites the soul to the body, and frees his captive by overloading him with chains. The union being dissolved, the soul is free; it no longer depends on the tyrant, because he communicates with it only by means of body. After the destruction of the organs of the body, the soul is superior to every effort of a despot's rage. Death removes the soul beyond the reach of the most powerful monarch. After death, the soul becomes invisible, and a tyrant's eye searcheth for it in vain: it ceaseth to be tangible, his chains and his fetters can hold it no more: it is no more divisible, his gibbets and his racks, his pincers and his wheels, can rend it no more: none of his fires can burn it, for it is not combustible: nor can any of his dungeons confine it, for it is immaterial.

Would to God, my brethren, that we were well acquainted with our real grandeur, and, perceiving our
 own

own excellence, were above trembling at those con- S E R M.
temptible worms of the earth, who fancy that they know XII,
how to terrify us, only because they have acquired the
audacity of addressing us with insolence and pride.
There is no extravagance, there is not even a shadow
of extravagance, in what we have advanced on the
grandeur of an immaterial spirit. We have not said
enough. It is not enough to say that a soul can neither
be disordered by chains, nor racks, nor gibbets, nor
pincers, nor fires; it defies the united power of uni-
versal nature. Yea, were all the waters that hang in the
clouds, and that roll in the sea, were every drop col-
lected into one prodigious deluge, to overwhelm it,
it would not be drowned. Were mountains the most
huge, were masses the most enormous, were all matter, to
compose, if I may speak so, one vast ponderous weight
to fall on and to crush it, it would not be bruised, yea,
it would not be moved. Were all the cedars of Le-
banon, with all the brimstone of Asphaltites, and with
every other inflammable matter, kindled in one blaze to
consume it, it would not be burnt. Yea, when *the bea-* 2 Pet. iii.
vens pass away with a great noise, when the constellations of 10.
heaven fall, when the elements melt with fervent heat, when
the earth, and all the works that are therein, are burnt up,
when all these things are dissolved, thou, human soul! shalt
surmount all these vicissitudes and rise above all their
ruins! Who art thou? Immaterial spirit! Who art
thou to be afraid of a man?

But, if the soul, considered in its nature; if the
soul, as a spiritual being, be superior to human ty-
ranny; what homage, on this very account, what sub-
mission and abasement, or, to confine ourselves to the
text, what fear ought we not to exercise toward the
Supreme Being? *Who would not fear thee, O King of*
nations? God alone hath the power of destroying an
immaterial soul; God alone hath the power of pre-
serving it. God is the only father of spirits. Fear not Heb. xii.
them which kill the body: but fear him which is able to 9.
destroy

S E R M. *destroy the soul. Yea, I say unto you, fear him.* God alone can act immediately on a spiritual creature. He needs neither the fragrance of flowers, nor the flavour of foods, nor any of the mediums of matter, to communicate agreeable sensations to the soul. He needs neither the action of fire, the rigor of racks, nor the galling of chains, to produce sensations of pain. He acts immediately on the soul. It is he, human soul! It is he, who, by leaving thee to revolve in the dark void of thine unenlightened mind, can deliver thee up to all the torments that usually follow ignorance, uncertainty, and doubt. But the same God can expand thine intelligence just when he pleaseth, and enable it to lay down principles, to infer consequences, to establish conclusions. It is he, who can impart new ideas to thee, teach thee to combine those which thou hast already acquired, enable thee to multiply numbers, shew thee how to conceive the infinitely various arrangements of matter, acquaint thee with the essence of thy thought, its different modifications and its endless operations. It is he, who can grant thee new revelations, develop those which he hath already given thee, but which have hitherto lain in obscurity; he can inform thee of his purposes, his counsels, and decrees, and lay before thee, if I may venture to say so, the whole history of time and eternity: For nothing, either hath subsisted in time, or will subsist in eternity, but what was preconceived in the counsels of his infinite intelligence. It is he, who alone, and for ever, can excite infinite sensations of pleasure or pain within thee. It is he, who can apprehend the soul of a tyrant, amidst the most gay and festive objects, among the most servile flatteries of a court, and, in spite of a concourse of pleasures, produce such horrors and fears, and exquisite torments, as shall change even a Belshazzar's countenance, trouble his thoughts, loose the joints of his loins, and smite his knees one against another. And it is he also, who is able to divert

Dan. v. 6.

divert a sensation of pain, amidst the greatest torments, S E R M.
yea, to absorb a strong sensation of pain in a stronger XII.
sensation of pleasure. He can make a martyr triumph,
all involved in fire and flame, by *shedding abroad ef-* Rom. v. 5.
fusions of love in his heart: the peace of God which Phil. iv. 7.
*passeth all understanding, and which keeps the senses,** that
is, a peace which is superior to the action of the senses,
and not to be interrupted by the exercise of them. It
is he, who can enable him to celebrate a victory during
an apparent defeat; who can overflow, in a sufferer's
heart, the pains of martyrdom with the pleasures of
paradise, and fill the mouth with shouts of triumph
and songs of praise.

Speak, ye martyrs of Jesus Christ, tell us what in-
fluence the infinite God hath over the soul! Be ye
our divines and philosophers. What did ye feel,
when, penetrating through a shower of stones, ye cried,
Behold, we see the heavens opened, and the son of man Acts vii.
standing on the right hand of God? What did ye feel, 56.
when experiencing all the rage of cruel Nero, ye ex-
ulted, *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God?* But this Rom. v. 2.
is not the whole of the believers joy. The expectation
of arriving at great happiness by means of tribulations
may naturally produce a patient submission to tribu-
lations. But here is something more. *We rejoice,*
saith S. Paul, *in hope of the glory of God. And not*
only so, adds he, (weigh this expressive sentence, my
brethren,) *not only so;* it is not only *the hope of the glory*
of God that supports and comforts us; *not only so;*
but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation
worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience
hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of
God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which
is

* Our author uses the common reading of the French bible, which
is, *garde les sens*. The original word is used in the holy scriptures for
reflection Rom. vii. 23. and for sensation Jam. i. 23. The reason of our
following the French reading in this place is obvious. Where the
same reason does not oblige us, we have made it a law, in quotations
of scripture, scrupulously to adhere to our English text.

S E R M. *is given unto us.* What did ye feel, when your executioners, not being able to obtain your voluntary adoration of their idols, endeavoured to obtain it by force; when, refusing to offer that incense which they had put into your hands, ye sang, *Blessed be the Lord, who teacheth our hands to war and our fingers to fight?* What did ye feel, when, wrapping your heads in the few rags that persecution had left you, ye refused to look at the worship of idols, and patiently submitted to be bruised with bastinadoes, condemned to the galleys, and chained to the oars? What did ye feel, when, in that painful situation, ye employed the remainder of your strength to look upward and to adore the God of heaven and earth? It is God who supports his creature amidst all these torments, and he alone can infinitely diversify and extend his sensibility. None but he can excite in the soul those ineffable pleasures, of which we have no ideas, and which we can express by no names: but which will be the objects of our eternal praises, if they be the objects of our present faith and hope. It is God, and only God, who can communicate happiness in this manner. None of this power is in the hand of man. *Who art thou, spiritual creature, to be afraid of a man?*

But, we add farther, *Who art thou, immortal creature, to be afraid of a man that shall die?* The immortality of the soul elevates it above a mortal power, and renders supreme fear a just homage to none but to that Being whose dominion continues as long as the soul continues to exist. Can we be such novices, I do not say in the school of revelation, but in that of the most superficial reason, as to confound the duration of the soul with the duration of life? Or rather, are we so expert in the art of going from the great to the little, from the little to the less, from the less to the least divisible parts of time, or of matter, as to assign an atom of matter so minute, or an instant of time so inconsiderable, that either of them would express the shortness

shortness of a mortal life in comparison of the duration of an immortal soul? The most accurate teachers of logic and metaphysics forbid the use of the terms, *length, duration, period*, in speaking of eternity. We may say *a length, a duration, a period*, of a thousand, or of ten thousand millions of ages: but, if we speak accurately and philosophically, we cannot say *the duration of eternity, the length of eternity, the periods of eternity*; because all the terms that are applicable to time, are inadequate to eternity. No, no, ye would attempt difficulties altogether insurmountable, were ye to try to find a quantity so small as to express the shortness of a mortal life in comparison of the duration of an immortal soul. Not only the most expert mathematician is unequal to the attempt: but it implies a contradiction to affirm, that the infinite spirit can do this; because contradiction never is an object of infinite power, and because it implies a contradiction to measure the existence of an immortal soul by the duration of a mortal life. It can never be said that a hundred years are the thousandth, or the ten thousandth, or the hundred thousandth part of eternity. The inspired writers, whose language was often as just as their ideas were pure, have told us, that life is as the *withering grass*, as a *fading flower*, as a *declining shadow*; *swifter than the rapid and imperceptible motion of a weaver's shuttle*. They call it a *vapour*, that is dissipated in the air; a *dream*, of which no vestige remains when the morning is come; a *thought** that vanisheth as soon as it is formed; a *phantom*† which walketh in a vain shew. But by all these emblems they meant to excite humility in us; but not to give us any ideas of a proportion between the duration of *withering grass, fading flowers, declining shadows*, the time of throwing a *weaver's shuttle*, of the dissipation of a *vapour*, of the passing of a *dream*, of the forming and losing of a *thought*, of the appearance of a *phantom*,

S E R M.
XII.Isa. xl. 7.
Ps. cii. 11.
Job vii. 6.
James iv.
14.
Ps. lxxiii.
20.

VOL. I.

R r

and

* Psal. xc. 9. Heb.

† Psal. xxxix. 5, 6. Heb.

S B R M. and the eternal existence of an immortal soul. Such
 XII. is the life of man! and such the duration of the dominion of a tyrant over an immortal soul! a duration which is only a point in eternity. A tyrant is mortal, his empire expires with his life; and were he to employ the whole course of his life in tormenting a martyr, and in trying to impair his felicity, he would resemble an idiot throwing stones at the lightning, while, in an indivisible moment, and with an inconceivable rapidity, it caught his eye as it passed from the east to the west.

1 Tim. i.
 27.

But God is *the king immortal*, and the eternity of his dominion is sufficient, my dear hearers, to demonstrate the truth of the text, and to fix all the possible attention of your minds on this question, *Who would not fear thee O king of nations?* The immortal king is the only fit object of the fear of an immortal soul. There is no empire immortal but that of God, no dominion unchangeable but his. When the soul enters eternity it will be subject only to the God of eternity: O my
 Pf. cii. 24. God, of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands: *They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end!* We must, of necessity, take up again the words *space, duration, period*, which we just now discarded for their impropriety, when applied to eternity. During the periods of eternity, through all the duration of the existence of him, who is *the same*, and whose years *shall have no end*, the immortal God will for ever produce the happiness, or the misery of an immortal soul. His dominion over it will be eternally exercised in rendering it happy or miserable. The reprobate soul will eternally be the object of the avenging power of this God, for it will eternally be under the hand of its judge. The faithful soul will eternally be the recipient of the beneficence of the immortal God, who is the worthy object, the only object,

of

of solid hope and supreme fear. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell: yea I say unto you fear him. Who would not fear thee, O king of nations? Dost not fear appertain to thee alone?* S E R M. XII.

III. Here, my brethren, could I think that I had been preaching to marbles, and to rocks; could I think that I had been discoursing to men, who attended on the preacher without hearing the sermon, or who heard without understanding it; I should think other proofs needful to demonstrate, that God alone merited the homage of supreme fear. Could I think that I had been preaching to men, who were all absorbed in sense and matter, and who could form no ideas in their minds unless some material objects were presented to their senses, or some imagery taken from sensible objects were used to excite them; I would insist on the third part of this discourse. If the idea of a Being, whose will is self-efficient, and who can act immediately on a spiritual soul, were not sufficient to incline you to render the homage of fear to God, I would represent him under the third notion, which we gave you of him, as making all creatures fulfil his will. If tyrants, executioners, prisons, dungeons, racks, tortures, pincers, caldrons of boiling oil, gibbets, stakes, were necessary; if all nature, and all the elements were wanted to inspire that soul with fear, which is so far elevated above the elements, and all the powers of nature: I would prove to you that tyrants and executioners, prisons and dungeons, racks and tortures and pincers, caldrons of boiling oil, gibbets and stakes, all nature and all the elements fulfil the designs of *the king of nations*; and that, when they seem the least under his direction, they are invariably accomplishing his will.

These are not imaginary ideas of mine: but they are taken from the same scriptures that establish the first ideas, which we have been explaining. What do our prophets and apostles say of tyrants, executioners,

S E R M. and persecutors? In what colours do they paint them?

- XII. Behold, how God contemns the proudest potentates; see how he mortifies and abases them. O *Assyrian*, the rod of mine anger, the staff in your hand is mine indignation: howbeit, thy heart doth not think so. The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the rulers. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations. Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the most high. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way thou camest. O! how capable were our sacred authors of considering the grandees of the earth in their true point of light! O! how well they knew how to teach us what a king, or a tyrant, is in the presence of him, by whose command kings decree justice, and by whose permission, and even direction, tyrants decree injustice! The last words that we quoted from Isaiah, relate to Sennacherib. And who is this Sennacherib, whose general, Rabshakeh, is come up with a great host to overwhelm Jerusalem? Where is this great king of Assyria? What is this insolent mortal, who saith: *Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of mine hand? Shall the Lord deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? What is this Sennacherib? And what are all those who tread in his arrogant steps? They are wild beasts: but wild beasts in chains, conducted whither an almighty arm pleaseth to lead them. The power of this arm is a hook in the noses of these animals, a bridle*
- Isa. x. 5. 7.
- xiv. 5.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- xxxvii.
- 29.
- Prov. viii.
- 15.
- 2 Kings
- xviii. 17.
- 34.
- 33.

a bridle in their lips ; it turneth them by *the book* to the right or to the left, and it straighteneth or looseneth *the bridle* as it pleaseth. By this *book*, by this *bridle*, God led the Assyrian beast without his knowing it, and when *his heart did not think so* : he led him from Assyria to Judea, from Judea to Assyria, as his wisdom required his presence in either place. S E R M.
XII.

The prophets meant to inspire us with the same notion of insensible and inanimate beings, so that every thing which excites fear might lead us to *fear the king of nations*, who hath all things in his power, and moves all according to his own pleasure. We will not multiply proofs. The prophet, in the chapter out of which we have taken the text, mentions an object very fit to inspire us with the fear of *the king of nations*, who disposeth inanimate beings in such a manner : he describeth a tempest at sea. The gravity of this discourse, the majesty of this place, and the character of this auditory, will not allow those descriptions which a sportive fancy invents. We allow students to exercise their imaginations in an academy, and we pass over their glaring images in favour of their youth and inexperience : but sometimes descriptions supply the place of arguments, and a solid logic, not a puerile rhetoric, requires them. We are now in this case. In order to humble man in the presence of *the king of nations*, we tell him that this king can make all creatures fulfil his will. With the same design, our prophet gives a sensible example of the power of God, by transporting man to the ocean, and by shewing him *the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep*. *God uttereth his voice*, saith he, in a verse that follows the text, *and there is a noise of a multitude of waters in the heavens*. *He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth*. *He maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures*. Thou dull stupid man ! who art not stricken with the idea of a God, whose will is self-efficient, and who alone can act immediately on an immaterial

Pl. cvil. 24.

V. 13.

SERM. immaterial soul, come and behold some sensible proofs
 XII. of that infinite power, of which metaphysical proofs
 can give thee no idea! And thou, proud insolent
 man! go aboard the best-built vessel, put out to sea,
 set the most vigilant watch, surround thyself with the
 most formidable instruments; what art thou, when
 God *uttereth his voice*? What art thou, when the *noise*
resounds? What art thou, when torrents of rain seem
 to threaten a second deluge, and to make the globe
 which thou inhabitest one rolling sea? What art
 thou, when lightnings emit their terrible flashes?
 What art thou, when *the winds* come roaring out of
their treasures? What art thou then? Verily, thou
 art no less than thou wast in thy palace. Thou art no
 less than when thou wast sitting at a delicious table.
 Thou art no less than thou wast when every thing
 contributed to thy pleasure. Thou art no less than
 when, at the head of thine army, thou wast the terror
 of nations, shaking the earth with the stunning noise
 of thy warlike instruments: for, at thy festal board,
 within thy palace, among thy pleasures, at the head of
 thine armies, thou wast nothing before *the king of na-*
tions. As an immaterial and immortal creature, thou
 art subject to his immediate power: but, to humble
 and to confound thee, he must manifest himself to thee
 in sensible objects. Behold him then in this formi-
 dable situation: try thy power against his: silence *the*
noise of the multitude of waters: fasten the vessel that
 Ps. cvii. 27. *reeleth like a drunken man*; smooth the foaming waves
 26. that *mount thee up to heaven*; fill up the horrible gulfs
 Jonah ii. 7. *whither thou goest down to the bottoms of the mountains*;
 dissipate the lightning that flasheth in thy face; hush
 the bellowing thunders; confine the winds in their
 caverns; assuage the anguish of thy soul, and prevent
 its melting and exhaling with fear. How diminutive
 is man! my brethren. How many ways hath God to
 confound his pride! *He uttereth his voice, and there is*
a noise of a multitude of waters in the heavens. *He causeth*
the

*the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth. He S E R M. 2.
maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind XII.
out of his treasures. Who would not fear thee, O king
of nations?*

In this manner the prophets represent all beings, animate and inanimate, material and immaterial, as concurring in the creator's will. This is not a truth which requires the submission of faith, but every branch of it proceeds from reason, and is supported by experience. When God willeth the destruction, or the deliverance, of a people, all creation executes his design. When he is angry, every thing becomes an instrument of vengeance. A cherub, brandishing a flaming sword, prevents the return of guilty man to paradise. The air infected, the earth covered with noxious plants; the brute creation enraged, wage war with the rebel. Grasshoppers become *the Lord's great army*, flies swarm; waters change into blood, light turns to darkness, and all besiege the palace and the person of Pharaoh. The heavens themselves, *the stars in their courses, fight against Siferd*. The earth yawns, and swallows up Dathan and Abiram in its frightful caverns. Fire consumes Nadab, and Abihu, Korah and his company. A fish buries alive the prevaricating Jonah in his wide mouth. But, on the contrary, when God declares himself for a people, there is nothing in the universe, which God cannot make a mean of happiness. The heavens unfurl their beauties; the sun expands his light; the earth adorns herself with flowers, and loads herself with fruits, to entertain the favourite of *the king of nations*; while the animals become teachable, and offer to bow to his service. *All things work together for good to them that love God.* *All things are yours, whether Paul, or Cephas, or the world.* Behold, I will do a new thing. The beasts of the field shall honour me; the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. *Ye shall go out with joy, and be led*

S E R M. *led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall*
 XII. *break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the*
 lv. 12. *field shall clap their hands. Drop down, ye heavens from*
 xlv. 8. *above, let the earth open and bring forth salvation!*

Thus, my brethren, hath God proportioned himself to our meanness and dulness, in order to inspire us with fear. Is it necessary, to make us fear God, that we should see bodies, various parts, and prodigious masses of matter, march at his word to fulfill his will? Well, Behold bodies, in various parts and in vast masses! Behold! universal nature moving at his word, and fulfilling his will. Let us fear God in this view of him, if our minds enveloped in matter cannot conceive an idea of a being, whose will is self-efficient, and who alone can act on immaterial souls. But, my brethren, a mind accustomed to meditation hath no occasion for this last notion: the first absorbs all. A God, every act of whose will is effectual, is alone worthy of the homage of fear. A just notion of his power renders all ideas of means useless. The power of God hath no need of means. Were I existing alone with God, God could make me supremely happy, or supremely miserable: one act of his will is sufficient to do either. We do not mean to enlarge the idea, when, speaking of an all-sufficient creator, who is superior to the want of means, we treat of a concurrence of creatures: we only mean to level the subject to the capacities of some of our hearers.

Let us sum up what has been said. To consider a creature as the cause of human felicity is to pay him the homage of adoration, and to commit idolatry. The avaricious man is an idolater; the ambitious man is an idolater; the voluptuous man is an idolater: And to render to a creature the homage of fear is also idolatry; for supreme fear is as much due to God alone as supreme hope. He, who fears war, and doth not fear the God, who sends war, is an idolater. He, who fears the plague, and who doth

doth not fear the God, who sends the plague, is an idolater. S E R M.
XII.

It is idolatry, in public, or in private, adversities, to have recourse to second causes, to little subordinate deities, so as to neglect to appease the wrath of the supreme God. To consult the wise, to assemble a council, to man fleets, to raise armies, to build forts, to elevate ramparts, and not to consider the succour of heaven, which alone is capable of giving success to all such means, is to be guilty of idolatry. Isaiah reproveth the Jews in the most severe manner for this kind of idolatry. *In that day*, saith the prophet, speaking of the precautions which they had taken to prevent the designs of their enemies; *In that day, thou didst look to the armour of the house of the forest. Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. Ye have made also a ditch between the two walls, for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker of this Jerusalem, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago. And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord of hosts.* Do we deserve less cutting reproaches? *In that day*, in the day of our public and private calamities, we have consulted wise men, we have assembled councils, we have fitted out fleets, and raised armies, we have pretended by them to secure these provinces from impending dangers, and we have not had respect unto him that fashioned them long ago. But what are wise men? What are councils? What are navies? What are armies and fortifications, but subordinate beings, which God

S E R M. directs as he pleaseth? Ah! ye penitential tears, ye
 XII. days of sackcloth and ashes, ye solemn humiliations, ye sighs that ascend to God, ye fervent prayers, ye saints, who impart your souls in fervor; and, above all, ye sincere conversions to *the king of nations*, love to his laws, obedience to his commands, submission to his will, tenderness to his people, zeal for his altars, devotedness to his worship; if ye do not prevail with *the king of nations* to favour our designs, what must our destiny be? And ye, tragical designs, black attempts, shameful plots, impure associations, criminal intrigues, execrable oaths, atrocious calumnies, cruel falsehoods, with what oceans of misery will ye overflow us, if ye arm *the king of nations* against us?

To conclude. There is much imbecillity, if no idolatry, in us, if, while we fear God, we stand in too much awe of second causes, which sometimes appear terrible to us. No, no, revolution of ages, subversion of states, domestic seditions, foreign invasions, contagious sicknesses, sudden and untimely deaths, ye are only the servants of that God, whose favourite creature I am. If, by his command, ye execute some terrible order on me, I will receive it as a comfortable order, because it is executed only for my good. Trouble my peace: perhaps it may be fatal to me. Turn the tide of my prosperity, which seems to constitute my glory: perhaps it may be dangerous to me. Snap the silken bonds, that have so much influence on the happiness of my life: perhaps they may become my idols. Pluck out my eyes, cut off my hands: perhaps they may cause me to *offend*, and may plunge me into the bottomless abyss. Bind me to a cross: provided it be my saviour's cross. Cut the thread of my life: provided the gates of immortal happiness be opened to me.

Mat. xviii.
2.

Christians, let us satiate our souls with these meditations. Let us give up our hearts to these emotions. Let us fear God, and let us fear nothing else. *Fear*

not

not, thou worm Jacob. Fear thou not, for I am with thee: Be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the holy one of Israel. Who would not fear thee, O king of nations? for to thee doth it appertain. May God inspire us with these sentiments! To him be honour and glory for ever! Amen.

... that I am your Father, and you are my children. I have loved you from the beginning, and I will love you forever. I have given you the promise of life, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of peace, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of joy, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of love, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of life, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of peace, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of joy, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of love, and I will keep it.

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... that I am your Father, and you are my children. I have loved you from the beginning, and I will love you forever. I have given you the promise of life, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of peace, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of joy, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of love, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of life, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of peace, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of joy, and I will keep it. I have given you the promise of love, and I will keep it.

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S H E M D N X

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worked with the administration of the Lord's Temple.

S E R M O N XIII.

The MANNER of praising G O D,

Vol. 1.

SEYMOUR XIII.

The Manner of praising God.

Vol. I.

S E R M O N XIII.

The MANNER of praising GOD.

Preached after the administration of the Lord's supper.

PSALM xxxiii. 1.

Praise is comely for the upright.

THERE is something very majestic, my brethren, in the end for which we are now assembled in the presence of God. His Providence hath infinitely diversified the conditions of those who compose this assembly. Some are placed in the most eminent, others in the most obscure, posts of society. Some live in splendor and opulence, others in meanness and indigence. One is employed in the turbulence of the army, another in the silence of the study. Notwithstanding this infinite variety of employments, ranks, and ages, we all assemble to day in one place; one object occupies us; one sentiment animates us; one voice makes the church resound, *praise ye the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever.* If there be an object, that can give a mortal any ideas of the first impressions, which are made on a soul, at its first entering the glorious palace of the blessed God in heaven, it is this. The first objects, that strike such a soul, are multitudes of all nations, tongues, and people, concentrated in a meditation on the beneficence of God, prostrating themselves before his throne, casting their crowns at his

S E R M. his feet, and crying, out of the abundance of their hearts,
 XIII. which contemplate the perfections of a Being worthy of
 Rev. vii. their profoundest praise, *Amen, Blessing, and glory, and*
 12. *wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and*
 xi. 17. *might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen. We*
give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and
 xv. 3. *wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy*
great power, and hast reigned. Great and marvellous are
 Psal. l. 5. 6. *thy works, Lord God almighty; just and true are thy ways,*
thou king of saints! Unto him that loved us, and washed
us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings
and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and
dominion for ever and ever. Amen. This is the employ-
ment of the blessed in heaven: this is what we are
doing to day on earth.

But what a contradiction, what a contrast, appears, when, lifting up the exterior habit of piety, that covers some of us, we examine the inward dispositions of the heart. The psalms, which are uttered with the voice, are contradicted by the tempers of the heart. The mouths, that were just now opened to bless the Creator, will presently be opened again to blaspheme and to curse him. The praises, which seemed so proper to please him in whole honour they were offered, will incur this reproof, Thou wicked man! *What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?*

My brethren, if we would join our voices with those of angels, we must have the sentiments of angels. We must, (at least, as far as the duty is imitable by such frail creatures) we must, in order to worship God as those happy spirits praise him, love him as they do, serve him as they do, devote ourselves to him as they devote themselves to him; and this is the manner of praising God, to which I exhort, and in which I would endeavour to instruct, you to day, agreeably to the prophet's exalted notion of it in the words of the text. What day can be more proper to inspire such a noble design? What day can be more proper to en-
 gage

engage you to mix your worship with that of glorified S E R V A N T S intelligences, than this, on which we are come unto XIII. the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an Heb. xii. 22, 23. innumerable company of angels, and to the church of the first-born which are written in heaven?

But, who are we, to be admitted into a society so holy? Great God! Thou dost appear to us to day, as thou didst formerly to thy prophet, *sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and thy train filling the temple.* Isa. vi. 1 Around thee stand the Seraphims, covering themselves with their wings in thy majestic presence, and crying one to another, *Holy, holy, holy; is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* We are stricken, as thy prophet was, with such a tremendous vision, and each of us cries, with him, *Wo is me! I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips!* and yet, *mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts.* O great God! command one of thy Seraphims to fly to us, as he flew to him; bid him touch our mouths, as he touched his, with a live coal 6. taken from off the altar; and, in this day of grace and mercy; let him say to each of us, *Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged!* Amen. 7.

Praise is comely for the upright. The praising of God is a duty, of which we may form two different notions: a general, and a particular notion. By a general notion of praise, I mean; the exercise of a man, who, being capable of examining sublime objects, and of comprehending grand subjects, fixeth his attention on the attributes of God, feels the force of those proofs which establish the truth of them, is delighted with them, to a certain degree, and is happy in publishing their praise. I mean, by a particular notion of praising God, the exercise of a man, who, having received some signal favour of God, loves to express his gratitude for it.

Each of these exercises of praise supposeth *reflections, and sentiments.* To praise God in the first sense, to

S E R M. reflect on his attributes, to converse, and to write about
 XIII. them, without having the heart affected, and without
 loving a being, who is described as supremely amiable,
 is a lifeless praise, more fit for a worldly philosopher
 than for a rational christian. To praise God in the
 second sense, to be affected with the favors of God,
 without having any distinct notions of God, without
 knowing whether the descriptions of the perfections
 that are attributed to him be flights of fancy or real
 truths, is an exercise more fit for a bigot, who believes
 1 Cor. ii. without knowing why, than for a *spiritual man, who*
 15. *judgeth all things.* If we distinguish the part that these
 two faculties, reflection, and sentiment, take in these two
 exercises of praise, we may observe that the first, I mean,
 the praise of God taken in a general sense, is the fruit
 of *reflection*, and the second of *sentiment*. The first is,
 if I may be allowed to speak so, the praise of the mind:
 the second is the praise of the heart.

It is difficult to determine which of these two notions
 prevails in the text, whether the psalmist use the word
praise in the first, or in the second sense. If we judge
 by the whole subject of the psalm both are included.
 The praise of the heart is easily discovered. Whether
 the author of the psalm were Hezekiah, as many of the
 fathers thought, who say that this prince composed it
 after the miraculous defeat of Sennacherib: or whether,
 which is most likely, David were the composer of it,
 after one of those preternatural deliverances, with which
 his life was so often signalized: what I call the praise
 of the heart, that is, a lively sense of some inestimable
 blessing, is clearly to be seen. On the other hand, it
 is still clearer, that the sacred author doth not celebrate
 only one particular object in the psalm. He gives a
 greater scope to his meditation, and compriseth in it
 all the works, and all the perfections of God.

Although the solemnity of this day calls us less to
 the praise of the mind, than to that of the heart;
 although we intend to make the latter the principal
 subject

subject of this discourse; yet it is necessary to attend a little to the former. S E R M.
XIII.

I. *The praise of the Lord*, taking the word praise in the vague sense, that we have affixed to the term, is comely for the upright: and it is comely for none but for them.

Praise is comely for the upright. Nothing is more worthy of the attention of an intelligent being, particularly, nothing is more worthy of the meditation of a superior genius, than the wonderful perfections of the Creator. A man of superior genius is required, indeed, to use his talents to cultivate the sciences and the liberal arts: but, after all, the mind of man, especially of that man, to whom God hath given superior talents, which assimilate him to celestial intelligences, was not created to unravel a point in chronology, to learn the various sounds by which different nations signify their ideas, to measure a line, or to lose itself in an algebraic calculation; the mind of such a man was not created to study the stars, to count their number, to measure their magnitude, to discover more than have yet been observed. Nobler objects ought to occupy him. It becomes such a man to contemplate God, to guide the rest of mankind, to lead them to God, who dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto, and to teach us to attenuate the clouds, that hide him from our feeble eyes. It becomes such a man to use that superiority, which his knowledge gives him over us, to elevate our hearts above the low region of terrestrial things, where they grovel with the brute beasts, and to help us to place them on the bright abode of the immortal God. The praise of the Lord is comely for upright men.

But praise is comely only for upright men. I believe it is needless now to explain the word *uprightness*. The term is taken in the text in the noblest sense: this is a sufficient explication, and this is sufficient also to convince us that the praising of God is comely for none

S E R M. but upright men. I cannot see, without indignation,
 XIII. a philosopher trifle with the important questions that relate to the attributes of God, and make them simple exercises of genius, in which the heart hath no concern, examining whether there be a God with the same indifference with which he enquires whether there be a vacuum in nature, or whether matter be infinitely divisible. On determining the questions which relate to the divine attributes depend our hopes and fears, the plans that we must form, and the course of life which we ought to pursue: and with these views we should examine the perfections of God: these are consequences that should follow our enquiries. With such dispositions the psalmist celebrated the praises of God, in the psalm out of which we have taken the text. How comely are the praises of God in the mouth of such a man!

Let us follow the holy man a moment in his meditation. His psalm is not composed in scholastic form, in which the author confines himself to fixed rules, and, scrupulously following a philosophical method, lays down principles, and infers consequences. However, he establisheth principles the most proper to give us sublime ideas of the Creator; and he speaks with more precision of the works and attributes of God than the greatest philosophers have spoken of them.

How absurdly have philosophers treated of the origin of the world? How few of them have reasoned conclusively on this important subject? Our prophet solves the important question by one single principle, and, what is more remarkable, this principle, which is nobly expressed, carries the clearest evidence with it.

Ver. 6. The principle is this: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.* This is the most rational account, that was ever given, of the creation of the world. The world is the work of a self-efficient will, and it is this principle

principle alone that can account for its creation. The **S E R M.** most simple appearances in nature are sufficient to lead **xiii,** us to this principle. Either my will is self-efficient, or there is some other being whose will is self-efficient. What I say of myself, I say of my parents, and what I affirm of my parents, I affirm of my more remote ancestors, and of all the finite creatures from whom they derived their existence. Most certainly, either finite beings have self-efficient wills, which it is impossible to suppose, for a finite creature with a self-efficient will is a contradiction: either, I say, a finite creature hath a self-efficient will; or there is a first cause who hath a self-efficient will; and that there is such a being is the principle of the psalmist; *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

If philosophers have reasoned inconclusively on the origin of the world, they have spoken of its government with equal uncertainty. The psalmist determines this question with great facility, by a single principle, which results from the former, and which, like the former, carries its evidence with it. *The Lord looketh from heaven: he considereth all the works of all the inhabitants of the earth.* This is the doctrine of Providence. And on what is the doctrine of Providence founded? On this principle: *God fashioneth their hearts alike.* Attend a moment to the evidence of this reasoning, my brethren. The doctrine of Providence, expressed in these words, *God considereth the works of the inhabitants of the earth,* is a necessary consequence of this principle, *God fashioneth their hearts alike,* and this principle is a necessary consequence of that which the psalmist had before laid down to account for the origin of the world. Yes! from the doctrine of God the Creator of men, follows that of God the inspector, the director, the rewarder, and the punisher of their actions. One of the most specious objections, that hath ever been opposed to the doctrine of Providence, is a contrast between

13,

14,

15,

S E R M. between the grandeur of God and the meanness of
 XIII. men. How can such an insignificant creature as man be an object of the care and attention of such a magnificent being as God? No objection can be more specious, or, in appearance, more invincible. The distance between the meanest insect and the mightiest monarch, who treads and crushes reptiles to death without the least regard to them, is a very imperfect image of the distance between God and man. That which proves that it would be beneath the dignity of a monarch to observe the motions of ants, or worms, to interest himself in their actions, to punish, or to reward them, seems to demonstrate, that God would degrade himself were he to observe, to direct, to punish, to reward mankind, who are infinitely inferior to him. But, one fact is sufficient to answer this specious objection: That is, that God hath created mankind. Doth God degrade himself more by governing than by creating mankind? Who can persuade himself, that a wise Being hath given to intelligent creatures faculties capable of obtaining knowledge and virtue, without willing that they should endeavour to acquire knowledge and virtue? Or who can imagine, that a wise Being, who willeth that his intelligent creatures should acquire knowledge and virtue, will not punish them, if they neglect those acquisitions; and will not shew by the distribution of his benefits that he approves their endeavours to obtain them?

Unenlightened philosophers have treated of the attributes of God with as much abstruseness as they have written of his works. The *moral attributes* of God, as they are called in the schools, were mysteries which they could not unfold. These may be reduced to two classes: attributes of *goodness*, and attributes of *justice*. Philosophers, who have admitted these, have usually taken that for granted which they ought to have proved. They collected together in their minds all perfections, they reduced them all to one object, which they

they denominated a perfect being: and supposing, without proving, that a perfect Being existed, they attributed to him, without proof, every thing that they considered as a perfection. The psalmist shews by a surer way that there is a God supremely just, and supremely good. It is necessary, in order to convince a rational being of the justice and goodness of God, to follow such a method as that which we follow to prove his existence. When we would prove the existence of God, we say, there are creatures; therefore, there is a creator. In like manner, when we would prove, that the creator is a just, and a good, being, we say, there are qualities of goodness and justice in creatures; therefore, he, from whom these creatures derive their existence, is a Being just and good. Now, this is the reasoning of the psalmist, in this psalm: *The Lord loveth righteousness and judgment, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord:* that is to say, it is impossible to consider the works of the creator, without receiving evidence of his goodness. And the works of nature, which demonstrate the goodness of God, prove his justice also: for God hath created us with such dispositions, that we cannot enjoy the gifts of his goodness without obeying the laws of his righteousness. The happiness of an individual, who procures a pleasure by disobeying the laws of equity, is a violent happiness, which cannot be of long duration: and the prosperity of public bodies, when it is founded in iniquity, is an edifice, which with its bases will be presently sunk and gone.

But what we would particularly remark is, that the excellent principles of the psalmist, concerning God, are not mere speculations: but truths from which he derives practical inferences; and he aims to extend their influence beyond private persons, even to legislators and conquerors. One would think, considering the conduct of mankind, that the consequences, which are drawn from the doctrines of which we have been speaking,

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Ver. 5.

SERMON. speaking, belong to none but to the dregs of the peo-

XIII. ple; that lawgivers and conquerors have a plan of morality peculiar to themselves, and are above the rules to which other men must submit. Our prophet had other notions. What are his maxims of policy?

12. They are all included in these words: *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.* What are his military maxims? They are all included in these words:

16. *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength: An horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.* Who proposeth these maxims? A hermit,

17. who never appeared on the theatre of the world? or a man destitute of the talents necessary to shine there? No: one of the wisest of kings; one of the most bold and able generals; a man, whom God his self elected to govern his chosen people, and to command those armies, which fought the most obstinate battles, and gained the most complete victories. Were I to proceed in explaining the system of the psalmist, I might prove, that as he had a right to infer the doctrine of providence from the works of nature, and that of the moral attributes of God from the works of creation; so, from the doctrines of the moral attributes of God, of providence, and of the works of creation, he had a right to conclude, that no conquerors or lawgivers could be truly happy but those, who acted agreeably to the laws of the just and good Supreme. But I shall not enlarge on this article.

Permit me only to place in one point of view the different phrases, by which the psalmist describes the deity in this psalm. *The earth is full of the goodness of*

5. *the Lord.* By the word of the Lord were the heavens

6. *made: and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

7. *He gathereth the waters of the sea together, as an heap:*

13. *he layeth up the depth in storehouses. The Lord looketh*

14. *from heaven: he beboldeth all the sons of men.* From the

place

place of his habitation he looked upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works. From these speculative ideas of God, he derives the following rules of practice. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him: because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us according as we hope in thee. How delightful it is, my brethren, to speak of God, when one hath talents to speak of him in such a noble manner, and when one intends to promote the fear and the love of him, with an universal obedience to him, from all that is said! How well it becomes such a man to praise God! The praise of the Lord is comely in the mouths of upright men.

II. Let us now apply the subject more immediately to the service of this day. To praise God is a phrase, which is sometimes taken, in a particular sense, for the exercise of a person, who, having received singular favours of God, delights in expressing his gratitude to him. This praise is comely in the mouth of an upright man for four reasons.

First. Because he arrangerth them in their true order, highly estimating what deserves a high esteem, and most highly estimating what deserves the highest esteem.

Secondly. Because he employs all his benefits in the service of his benefactor.

Thirdly. Because, while he recounts his blessings, he divests himself of all merit, and ascribes them only to the goodness of God from whom they proceed.

Fourthly. Because he imitates that goodness and love, which inclined God to bless him in such a manner.

I will affix to each of these reflections a single word. Praise, or if you will, gratitude, is comely for the upright, because it is wise, real, humble, and magnanimous: In these four respects, praise is comely for the upright. These

S E R M. are the sentiments, with which the august ceremony, of
XIII. which we have partaken this morning, should inspire us. These are the most important reflections, with which we can close this discourse.

I. The gratitude of upright men is *wise*. The praise of the Lord becomes them well, because, while they bless God for all their mercies, they arrange them in their proper order; they prize each according to its real worth, and that most of all which is of the greatest value. It is a very mortifying reflection, my brethren, that the more we study ourselves, the more clearly we perceive, that the love of the world, and of sensible things, is the chief spring of all our actions and sentiments. This disagreeable truth is proved, not only by the nature of our vices, but even by the genius of our virtues; not only by the offences that we commit against God, but by the very duties that we perform in his service.

A person so ungrateful, as not to discover any gratitude to God, when he bestows temporal blessings on him, can scarcely be found. We praise God, when he delivers us from any public calamity, or from any domestic adversity; when he recovers us from dangerous illnesses; when he raiseth us up an unexpected friend, or a protector, who assists us; when he sends us some prosperity, which renders life more easy. In such cases as these, we render an homage to God, that cannot be refused without ingratitude.

But we are extremely blameable, when, while we feel the value of these blessings, we remain insensible of the worth of other blessings, which are infinitely more valuable, and which merit infinitely more gratitude. A blessing that directly regards the soul, is more valuable than one which regards only the body. A blessing, that regards our eternal happiness, is of greater worth, than one which influenceth only the happiness of this life. Whence is it then, that, being so sensible of blessings of the first kind, we are so little affected with

with those of the last? How comes it to pass, that S E R M.
we are so full of gratitude, when God gives the state XIII.
some signal victory; when he prospers its trade; when
he strengthens the bonds, that unite it to powerful and
faithful allies; and so void of it, while he continues to
grant it the greatest blessing that a society of rational
creatures can enjoy, I mean a liberty to serve God
according to the dictates of our own consciences?
Whence is it, that we are so very thankful to God
for preserving our lives from the dangers that daily
threaten them; and so little thankful for his miracu-
lous patience with us, to which it is owing, that, after
we have hardened our hearts against his voice one year,
he invites us another year; after we have falsified our
promises made on one solemnity, he calls us to another
solemnity, and giveth us new opportunities of being
more faithful to him? Whence comes this difference?
Follow it to its source. Does it not proceed from
what we just now said? Is not love of the world, and
of sensible things, the grand spring of our actions and
sentiments? The world, the world; lo! this is the
touchstone, by which we judge of good and evil!

An *upright* man judgeth in another manner: he
will, indeed, bless God for all his benefits; but, as
he knows how to arrange them, so he knows how to
prize each according to its worth, and how to appor-
tion his esteem to the real value of them all.

According to such an estimation, what ought not
our gratitude to God to be to day, my dear brethren!
we may assure ourselves with the utmost truth, that had
the Lord united in our houses to day pleasures, gran-
deurs, and dignities; had he promised each of us a life
longer than that of a patriarch; a family as happy as
that of Job, after his misfortunes; glory as great as
that of Solomon; he would have bestowed nothing
equal to that blessing, which he gave us this morning.
He forgave those sins, which, had they taken their
natural course, would have occasioned endless remorse,

S E R M. and would have plunged us into everlasting misery
 XIII. and woe. A peace was *shed abroad* in our consciences,
 which gave us a foretaste of heaven. He excited
 hopes, that absorbed our souls in their grandeur. Let
 Rom. viii. us say all in one word: he gave us his son. *He that*
 32. *spared not his own son, how shall he not with him also*
freely give us all things?

2. The gratitude of upright men is *real*. The praise
 of the Lord becomes them, because, while they praise
 God for his benefits, they live to the glory of their
 benefactor. Every gift of God furnisheth us with
 both a motive and a mean of obedience to him. It is
 an excess of ingratitude to make a contrary use of his
 gifts, and to turn the benefits, that we receive, against
 the benefactor from whom we receive them. What
 gifts are they, by which God hath most distinguished
 us? Thee he hath distinguished by a penetrating
 genius, which renders the highest objects, the deepest
 mysteries, accessible to thee. Wo be to thee! if thou
 employ this gift to invent arguments against the truths
 of religion, and to find out sophisms that befriend in-
 fidelity. An *upright* man devotes this gift to the ser-
 vice of his benefactor; he avails himself of his genius,
 to discover the folly of sceptical sophisms, and to
 demonstrate the truth of religion. On thee he hath
 bestowed an astonishing memory. Wo be to thee! if
 thou use it to retain the pernicious maxims of the
 world. An *upright* man dedicates this gift to his be-
 nefactor; he employs his memory in retaining the
 excellent lessons of equity, charity, and patience, which
 the holy spirit hath taught him in the scriptures.
 To thee he hath given an authoritative elocution, to
 which every hearer is forced to bow. Wo be to thee!
 if thou apply this rare talent to seduce the minds, and
 to deprave the hearts, of mankind. An *upright* man
 devotes this blessing to the service of his benefactor;
 he useth his eloquence to free the minds of men from
 error, and their lives from vice. Towards thee God
 hath

hath exercised a patience, which seems contrary to his S E R M.
usual rules of conduct toward sinners, and by which xiii.
he hath abounded toward thee in forbearance and
long-suffering. Wo be to thee! if thou turn this
blessing to an opportunity of violating the commands
of God; if thine obstinacy run parallel with his pa-
tience, and if, *because sentence against an evil work is not* Ecc. viii.
executed speedily, thy heart be fully set in thee to do evil. ii.

An upright man devotes this blessing to his benefactor's
service. From the patience of God he derives motives
of repentance. How easily might this article be en-
larged! how fruitful in instruction would it be on this
solemnity! But we proceed.

3. Gratitude to God well becomes an upright man,
because it is *humble*; because an upright man, by pub-
lishing the gifts of God's grace, divests himself of
himself, and attributes them wholly to the goodness
of him from whom they came. Far from us be a
profane mixture of the real grandeurs of the creator
with the fanciful grandeurs of creatures! Far be
those praises, in which he who offers them always finds,
in his own excellence, the motives that induced the
Lord to bestow his benefits on him!

Two reflections always exalt the gifts of God in the
eyes of an upright man: a reflection on his meanness,
and a reflection on his unworthiness; and it is with this
comeliness of humility, if I may venture to call it so,
that I wish to engage you to praise God for the bless-
ings of this day.

1. Meditate on your *meanness*. Contrast yourselves
with God, who gives himself to you to day in such a
tender manner. How soon is the capacity of man
absorbed in the works and attributes of God! Conceive,
if thou be capable, the grandeur of a Being, who *made*
the heavens by his word, and all the host of them by the
breath of his mouth. Think, if thou be capable of
thinking, of the glory of a Being, who existed from all
eternity, whose understanding is infinite, whose power

is

S E R M. is irresistible, whose will is above controll. Behold
 XIII, him filling the whole universe with his presence. Behold him in the palace of his glory, inhabiting the praises of the blessed, surrounded by thousand thousands, and by ten thousand times ten thousand angels, who excel in strength, and who delight to fly at the first signal of his will. Thou human soul! contemplate this object, and recover thy reason. What art thou? What was thine origin? What is thine end? Thou diminutive atom! great only in thine own eyes; behold thyself in thy true point of view. Dust! Ashes! Putrefaction! glorious only at the tribunal of thine own pride; divest thyself of the rawdry grandeur in which thou lovest to array thyself. Thou vapour! Thou dream! Thou exhalation of the earth! evaporating in the air, and having no other consistence than what thine own imagination gives thee; behold thy vanity and nothingness. Yet this dream, this exhalation, this vapour, this dust and ashes and putrefaction, this diminutive creature, is an object of the eternal care and love of its God. For thee, contemptible creature! the Lord stretched out the heavens: for thee he laid the foundation of the earth: let us say more: For thee, contemptible creature! God formed the plan of redemption. What could determine the great Jehovah to communicate himself, in such a tender and intimate manner, to so contemptible a creature as man? His goodness, his goodness alone.

Although a sense of our meanness should not terrify and confound us, yet it should exclude arrogance, and excite lowly sentiments: But what will our humility be, if we estimate the gifts of God's grace by an idea of our unworthiness? Let each recollect the mortifying history of his own life. Remember, thou! thy fiery youth, in which, forgetting all the principles, that thy pious parents had taught thee, thou didst acknowledge no law but thine own passionate and capricious will. Remember, thou! that period, in which,

which, thy heart being infatuated with one object, and wholly employed about it, thou didst make it thine idol, and didst sacrifice to it thine honor, thy duty, thy God. Recollect, thou! the cruel use, that for many years thou didst make of thy credit, thy riches, thy rank, when, being devoured with self-love, thou wast insensible to the voice of the widow and the orphan, and to a number of distressed people, who solicited relief. Remember, thou! that fatal hour, the recollection of which ought to make thy *head waters*, and thine *eyes a fountain of tears*, that fatal hour, in which, God having put thee into the fiery trial of persecution, thou couldst not abide the proof. Like Peter, thou didst *not know* a disgraced redeemer; thou didst cowardly abandon a persecuted church, and wast just on the point of abjuring thy religion. Let each of us so consider himself as he seems in the eyes of a holy God. A criminal worthy of the most rigorous punishments! Let each of us say to himself. Notwithstanding all this, it is I, guilty I, I, whose sins are more in number than the hairs on my head; it is I, who have been admitted this morning into the house of God; it is I, who have been invited this morning to that mystical repast, which sovereign wisdom itself prepared; it is I, who have been encouraged against the just fears, which the remembrance of my sins had excited, and have heard the voice of God, proclaiming in my conscience, *Fear not thou worm Jacob*. It is I, who have been abundantly satisfied with the fatness of the house of God, and have drunk of the river of his pleasures. What inclines God to indulge me in this manner? Goodness only! O surpassing and inconceivable goodness! thou shalt for ever be the object of my meditation and gratitude! *How excellent is thy loving kindness O God!* These are the sentiments that ought to animate our praise to day. Such praise is comely for the upright.

Finally.

S E R M.
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1 Cor. iii.
18.

Finally. The gratitude of an upright man is *noble* and *magnanimous*. The praise of God well becomes the mouth of an upright man, because he takes the love of God to him for a pattern of his behaviour to his fellow creatures. S. Paul hath very emphatically expressed the happy change, which the gospel produceth in true christians. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.* Some commentators, instead of reading *we all beholding as in a glass*, as the expression is rendered in our translation, render the words, *we all becoming mirrors*. I will not undertake to prove that this is the meaning of the term: it is certainly the sense of the apostle.* He means to inform us, that the impression, which the evangelical display of the perfections of God makes on the souls of believers, engraves them on their minds, and renders them like mirrors, that reflect the rays, and the objects which are placed opposite to them, and represent their images. *They behold the glory of the Lord with open face. They are changed from glory to glory into the same image, even as by the spirit of the Lord.* I wish, my brethren, that the impression, which was made on you by the generosity and magnanimity of God, who loaded you this morning

* The idea of *reflecting*, while one contemplates, the attributes of God, is a very fine thought, and fully expressive of the benevolent effects which christianity produceth in its disciples: But Mr. Saurin, whose business as a christian minister was not with the *fine*, but the *true*, only meant, by what he said above, that it was agreeable to the general design of the apostle. Erasmus was the first who translated S. Paul's term *καθὼς ὁρᾷμεν* in *speculo representantes*. Beza renders it, in *speculo influentes*, and the French bibles have it, *nous contemplons comme en un miroir*. Our author was delighted with the ingenuity of Erasmus, however, he could not accede to his translation, because, 1. He could meet with no Greek author, cotemporary with S. Paul, who had used the term in the sense of Erasmus. 2. Because he could not perceive any connection between that signification and the phrase *with open face*. He abode therefore by the usual reading. See Serm. Tom. ix. S. viii. My idea of an object pleases me, therefore it is a true idea of it, is contemptible logic: yet how many pretended articles of religion have arisen from this way of reasoning!

morning with his gracious benefits, may transform you S & R. M. XIII.
to day into the same image from glory to glory. I would
animate you with this, the most noble, the most sub-
lime, the most comfortable, way of praising God.

What gave you so much peace and pleasure this
morning, in what God did for you? Was it the par-
don of your sins? Imitate it; pardon your brethren.
Was it his past forbearance with you? Imitate it; mode-
rate that impatience which the ingratitude of your
brethren excites in your minds. Was it that spirit of
communication, which disposed a God, who is all-
sufficient to his own happiness, to go out of himself, as
it were, and to communicate his felicity to creatures?
Imitate it; go out of those intrenchments of prosperity,
in which ye lodge, and impart your benefits to your
brethren. Was it the continual watchfulness of God
for the salvation of your souls? Imitate it; exert your-
selves for the salvation of the souls of your brethren;
suffer not those, who are united to you by all the ties
of nature, society, and religion, to perish through your
lukewarmness and negligence. While ye triumphantly
exclaim, on this solemn festival, *Let us make a joyful* Pl. xcv.
noise to the Rock of our salvation! Remember your per-
secuted brethren, to whom God refuseth this pleasure;
remember *the ways of Zion, that mourn, because none* Lam. I.
come to the solemn feasts.

My brethren, how pleasing is a christian festival!
How comfortable the institution, to which we were
this morning called! But, I remember here a saying
of Jesus Christ to his apostles, *I have other sheep, which* John x.
are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and there shall
be one fold, and one shepherd. Alas! we also have sheep
in another fold. When shall we have the comfort of
bringing them into this? Ye divided families! who
are present in this assembly, when will ye be united?
Ye children of the reformation! whom the misfortunes
of the times have torn from us; ye dear parts of our-
selves! when will ye come to us? When will ye be

The Manner of praising God.

xiii. re-gathered to the flock of the great shepherd and bishop of our souls? When will ye shed in our assemblies tears of repentance, for having lived so long without a church, without sacraments, without public worship? When will ye shed tears of joy for having recovered these advantages?

Great God! Thou great God who bidest thyself this it to extinguish, or to inflame our zeal, that thou delayest the happy period? Are our hopes suspended or confounded? God grant, my dear brethren, that the praise, which we render to the Lord for all his benefits, may obtain their continuance and increase! And God grant, while he giveth us our lives for a prey, that those of our brethren may be given us also! To him be honor and glory for ever! Amen.



THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

My brethren, how pleasing is a christian festival! How comfortable the institution, to which we write this morning, called! But I remember, here a laying of Jesus Christ to his apostles, I have other joys, which are not of this kind: I must bring, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Alas! we also have been in another fold. When shall we have the comfort of bringing them into this? Ye divided families, who are present in this assembly, when will ye be united? Ye children of the reformation! whom the misfortune of the times have torn from us; ye dear parts of our selves! when will ye come to us? When will ye be

